

This Book, tho' perhaps ter-
rible to some, I can read with
the utmost Pleasure & Delight,
being for the most part what
I my self have actually ex-
perienced in the Course of
a Spiritual Life. There is
hardly a Passage in it, but
what I have experienced
something similar there-
unto. witness Tho: Austen.

de Roffa in Com: Cantab.
U. This mark in ^{clerical} margins, stands
for y^e word USE. to be apply'd
to some partic^r. uses in my MSS.
Papers.

☉ This mark (the sun) stands for spi-
ritual Comfort & consolation; as y^e
sun animates & invigorates eve-
ring ^{thing} with its genial warmth.

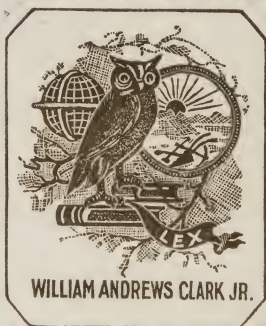
● This means Practical Truths
& Directions to be well Remem-
ber'd.

M.A. Cantab.

Thomas Austen, Minor Canon of Rochester
Vicar of St. Othello Kent. b. 1721
d. Oct. 1790. Bur. S^t. Margaret's Rochester
2 vols of his mss in B.M. I have his common
black book & William Cock MD. Fra.

6 [DEFOE (Daniel)], An Account of some Remarkable Passages in the Life of a Private Gentleman : with Reflections thereon. Relating to Trouble of Mind, some violent temptations, and a Recovery ; in order to awaken the presumptuous, and encourage the Despondent. GLASGOW, Printed for and sold by Robert Banks, Bookseller in STIRLING. 1765. 12mo, original sheep, ~~1765~~.

At the end is an interesting list of subscribers' names, with addresses, mostly in the neighbourhood of STIRLING.



WILLIAM ANDREWS CLARK JR.

A N
A C C O U N T
O F S O M E
Remarkable Passages
I N T H E
L I F E

Thos: OF A Austen
de Rossâ in comitat: Cantu. &c.
P R I V A T E. G E N T L E M A N;
With REFLECTIONS thereon.

I n T H R E E P A R T S.

Relating to Trouble of Mind, some violent Temptations, and a Recovery; in order to awaken the Presumptuous, and encourage the Despondent.

Left under his own Hand, to be communicated to the Publick after his Decease.

Sane Voti me participem statuam, si vel uni animæ, uno momento, una aliqua pia & sancta cogitatio ex hujus libelli lectione exsurgat. *Gerb. Medit.*

L O N D O N.

Printed and Sold by Joseph Downing in Bartholomew Close near West-Smithfield. 1708.

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PR3404
AIII

1st ed.

T H E
P U B L I S H E R
T O T H E
R E A D E R.

THE Author leaving the use of his Name at discretion; for some Reasons it is thought fit to suppress it. The privacy of his Person, express'd in the Title, indicates its uselessness. Things of this nature must carry their own evidence, to gain acceptance, which when they do, Names are of little value; since the judicious repute them but Ciphers till some real figures of truth complete the Sum: While some are candid in exposing the Flaws of their Lives, charitably to warn others of their danger, others are as critically censorious, and as ready to make odious Reflections, instead

The Publisher to the Reader.

of expressing gratitude, and learning Caution. These intimations may suffice, why the Author is not made publick. If some passages in these Papers relating to Fact, shou'd be called in question by any serious Persons, they may meet with some still living, who assisted the Party in his disconsolate Hours, who will be ready to bear their Testimony to Truth as occasion shall offer. After all, if the Historick part be frown'd upon in point of Truth, as fact; or reality, as represented in the following Discourse, a thing not at all unusual in matters of this nature; 'tis hop'd some serious Truths here deliver'd, may be of some use to well disposed Persons: And since that will in great measure answer the Author's true design, I'll acquiesce in those hopes, solemnly recommending it to the Divine Benediction, the very Life and Soul of all Performances. **THE**

T H E P R E F A C E.

WHAT I here relate, if I know my own Heart, is entirely dedicated to the Honor of God, and Service of Mankind. I can't think or express my self suitably to the Mercy of God, in which I have been so liberal a sharer; nor expose enough the rage and subtilty of the Legions of Hell, from whose Tyranny I suffer'd so terribly: The truth of both will appear in the sequel of this Narrative. God deals variously with his Children, as Satan does with his Vassals; the divulging then secrets of this kind, may inform the inobservant, too great Strangers to themselves, and these Exercises: Nay, the Judicious and Experienced stand not so fast, but they may receive a shock, and under Temptation, parallel Cases may help and comfort. God Disciplines some, to warn and encourage others; shou'd I then suppress his Visitations, so instructive, I might injure that Design, and defraud God of his Glory. This is the least I owe my great Lord and Master, and if I can

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accomplish it, I'm no farther solicitous what Censure passes upon me. If my Friends therefore, when I'm gone, think it needful to expose my Name, they may use their discretion; since none can load me more, than I shou'd my self.

The World abounds in variety of good Books; but were more Experimental Cases publish'd, the Devil's Kingdom wou'd be more confounded. Many may have useful Papers by them, which possibly may ne'er see the Light: If I can but excite such to the discharge of their Duty, while they see one expose himself, happy shall I repute my self in gaining that part of my Design: But leaving that to Providence, if I can but any way assist one poor Soul, I shall ne'er repent my Labour.

Such as engage in Subjects that blacken their own Character, can't rationally come within the imputation of Vanity. When the Favours of Heaven are mention'd, 'tis purely to the Glory of God's exceeding free Grace, without the least shadow of Merit in me, who am less than the least of any of his Mercies, and deserve nothing but pure Wrath and Vengeance. If any think some Passages seem strange, let them rest assured they are no less true; and such as prove so uncharitable, as to discredit one they can't justly suppose has any private interest to serve, let them know they injure themselves more than him.

I cast the whole, for better order and distinction, into Three parts. The first consists of Passages of lesser Moment, but very conducive to give light to what follows. He that contemns small things, shall fall by little and little,

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tle, says the Son of Syrach. Vice is a growing mischief, tho' its first appearance be but small; and he that sees not the Hand of Heaven in lesser Warnings and Kindnesses, grows habitually indispos'd to see greater, till he damns up the course of God's Bounty, and brings down his hot displeasure. The second contains a very peculiar dispensation; some severe and remarkable Providences. The third expresses the glorious Methods of Divine Grace in a Recovery. I here deviate more from the Historick part, to pay a deference to what I'm so much beholden, even the free Grace of God, and promote a modest, humble, healing Spirit. Examples are more cogent than Precepts; but since they confirm each the other; I intersperse some Reflections. The Style is not polite, nor is the Method calculated to please the Sons of Art: My Business is not to amuse, but edifie, which engages me to write in as familiar Terms as possible. I certainly pursue very false Measures, were I studious and able to gain repute, shou'd I attempt it by this Method. What I'm ambitious of, is, that I hope of an attempt at least to do some good: And bless God for enclining me to sacrifice what some are so fond of, to promote this blessed end; which I esteem a signal Favour.

.. Hand of Heaven.

examples.

I'm well appris'd, how obnoxious I am to censure, by the Concessions I make in the first and second Part. I know I provoke the scorn of a formidable Crew, who won't fail to pretend to draw my Picture with my own Pencil. I have given them some features they'll presume are purely Natural, so will not doubt of hitting my Complexion, and post me up for an errant Melancholick.

a
melancholick.

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*Fierce
contenders.*

*authors on
apparitions
& Devils.*

lancholick. They are your fierce contenders for meer Flesh and Blood, Matter and Motion: Who talk as despotically as if they had Wisdom by Patent from Heaven, and were invested in the sole propriety of true sense; and to question their dictates, were to oppose the very Oracles of Reason. If a Man talk a Syllable beyond the reach of Mechanick Powers, they immediately clap him up for a Lunatick in their own Fancies, and tell the World he Dreams or Raves. Dr. Hackwell in his Apology for the Providence of God, tells us, 'Tis impudence, after such full and repeated attestations of the Being and Operations of Devils, to deny them. Such as fairly consult the Narrative of Capt. Bell at the beginning of Luther's Colloq; Mensalia: What the Lord Clarendon's History mentions of the Duke of Buckingham, and compare that with what Sir Henry Wotton relates of him in his Life and Death, can't, I think, elude the force of those Convictions. To confront the many Histories upon Record of this Nature, with the idle Stories of Deceivers, or weak and credulous People, is trifling and ridiculous; and demonstrates how meanly the Sons of Wisdom can employ the mighty Talent they pretend to; while they basely force their Reason to truckle to the sordid interest of their Lusts: For what does all the force of their Conclusions of this nature amount to, but this, that because there are many Tales and Romances, there are no true Histories nor real accounts of things? To compare Becker, Scot, and Web---r, with the many Great and Learned Men that have written on this Subject,

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ject, is like equallizing a Mushroom or two of a few Hours growth and fall, with all the stately standing Cedars of Lebanon.

It must be granted, some good Men have been too ready to give their assent to matters of this kind at the first rebound, and approved themselves more impregnated with the innocence of the Dove, than the subtilty of the Serpent, which has exposed them to fallacy and imposition: But what more can be inferr'd hence, than what an ingenious Person has said upon it?

The best Men have this misfortune, upon no other ground, than that they are the best, to be the more credulous, and inclining rather to security, than diffidence, so easily give advantage to those, who, by their craft and insinuations, make it their design to triumph over their simplicity: Who thinking there cannot be a greater subtilty, than to live without subtilty, imagine it somewhat unreasonable to conceive, at the first sight, any suspicion of those by whom they had not as yet been over-reach'd.

Such as turn to Casaubon of Credulity, p. 31. so on, will see what Principles act those Men that deny the Operations of Spirits, what Characters he and other learned Men give of them: Particularly of Scot, p. 40, and 41. and what suits him may, for ought I know, the whole Clan; but that I leave to better judgments to determine. I know something of the Gentlemen I have been speaking of, and the strength of their Arguments, and am no stranger to Essays on the Spleen. I'm sure there is such a natural Distemper, and as sure there is a Devil,

Fallacy & imposition herein.

Blondel of the Sybils, p. 2.

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Devil, and such a thing as Temptation. The grand Idol of this Faction liv'd and dy'd in Childish Fears of what he asserted had no Being, and some since in such brutish stupidity, that if we shou'd measure the entity of the Soul by its degeneracy, one wou'd be tempted to think, such really had little or none.

Others there are of Character for goodness, who will afford me a large share of their Pity, as a Hypochondriacal Weakling, under the Power of delusion. Some of these are no great Philosophers, and much less skill'd in Physick; but for fear of being rank'd among low-soul'd, credulous Creatures, lisp so much after the mechanical Terms of the Men of Sense, till they get the Shiboleth of their Party. If a Man budge an Ace beyond the Sphere of atra bilis, he's dub'd an Enthusiastick Visionary, and what he says is compared to the Rapsodies of a Rosacruzian. I dare not implead these Gentlemens Virtue, but must their discretion. They abet not Sadducism designedly, but eventually: For whatever is maintain'd to be purely natural, that's really the effect, in part or whole, of invisible Powers, must be granted to have a tendency this way. I have heard some of these good Men deny with strange postivity the agency of the Devil in plain Cases, and ridicule Authentick Records of Apparitions, and other material Passages relating to the World of Spirits, that have long stood the test of time; and peremptorily to impute that to a Disease, which was the manifest effect of Temptation.

What Casaubon and Dr. Moor assert of Enthusiasm, must be granted; but I can't suppose either of them absolutely secluded those Instances

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ces of natural disorders they mention, from interfering with all Diabolical impressions. The former does not, but asserts in express Terms the contrary, as will appear hereafter: Nor can I suppose the latter shou'd, so smart a contender for the Being and Power of Spirits. I can't but wonder to find such as allow the instrumentality of Satan in ordinary Temptations, so positively excluding it in extraordinary Cases; 'Tis difficult to distinguish the impulses of our own Spirits from his, in some violent movements of the Passions; but that he often acts there behind the Curtain, none but a Sadducee, I think, will peremptorily deny. Be ye angry, and Sin not; let not the Sun go down upon your Wrath: Neither give place to the Devil. God tells us there are such Beings, and in general describes their Power and Employ, not to excite curiosity but watchfulness. 'Tis folly in us then to preclude their Influences in instances where their malicious Sagacity prompts them to intermingle, the more powerfully to deceive and work mischief. If some Gesticulations, Vociferations, and other extatick Motions, may be accounted for from Mechanical Principles, does it therefore follow, these malignant Powers can't associate with what's natural? or that it's no fair occasion to play their pranks, while Mens presumption runs strong to natural Causes without any suspicion of the concurrence of their Agency.

Our Idea's of Spirits, I think, are mostly fram'd by negative abstractions: Sure then, in so abstruce a Subject, Modesty shou'd govern us more than confidence: If we know not their Nature, how can we their Operations? God only is properly *ἰσχυρὸς καρδίας*, the Knower of Hearts; but how and to what degree Created Spirits converse with

Ephes. 4. 26,

27.
The Jews have a saying, Whoso is angry, omnes species Gehennæ ei dominantur, is subject to the Power of infernal Fiends. Buxt.

Acts 1. 24.

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with ours, no Mortal can determine. What's imprinted on the Fancy, is generally allow'd to fall under their cognizance, but how much or little our more refin'd Idea's interfere with that Power, can't nicely be determin'd; nor consequently how much precisely of our Thoughts may fall within their ken: But this is certain, they'll give shrewder guesses, by collating hints they are Masters of, than the most subtle Heads put together can. And if they can pry reflexivè into these recesses, why shou'd we question their influences on the Body, in some unusual Cases?

Let us take heed of stinting their Power, by the narrow Model of our weak conceptions: They have advantage enough of the greatest acknowledgers of their Craft and Power, which they'll assuredly ply some way to their detriment; let us then give them no more, by fond presumptive Opinions, tending to security. If such as stand on their guard are hard put to it, what a prey are they like to make of such as weaken their Watch by slighty conceits of such formidable Enemies? One of the greatest Masters of Reason in the present Age, gives us a conjecture about Spirits, which he is pleas'd to term extravagant, and to apologize for as a wild Fancy; which must be imputed to his Modesty, since if there appear any excess in the thing, I think it's justly imputable to that only of ingenuity. And I wish some pretenders to his Talent wou'd strive to imitate him more in this Virtue, to which they have the strongest Motives, both from his Example and their own deficiencies, compared with his attainments: And as they'll find this part of him the easiest and the

Lock of Hu-
mane Un-
derstanding
Book 2. Ch.
23. p. 162,
and 163. 2d.
Edit.

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the justest for them to follow, so in fine if they attain it, they shall feel it most profitable and highly advantageous. The Paragrace is too long to insert here, and I shall not do it so much injury as to dismember it, but only intimate, that it relates to some advantages Spirits may be conceiv'd to have over us; whither I refer the Curious. Let such as abound in their own sense to hammer out evasions and natural solutions in most palpable Cases, be at length con-jured to consider better; if not to the altering of their sentiments, yet at least to silence, that they prejudice not others. Let them remember they oppose the Judgments of many of the best and greatest Men; that Arguments from the best Topicks, from Scripture, Reason and Experience, fly in their Faces: Let Shame effect something of that which better Reasons shou'd entirely.

A Learned Man tells us, The sincere ar- Dr. Cudworth
dent Affections of devout Souls may be at- Sermon. 2d.
tended with some kind of Enthusiasm. p. 260.

For Enthusiasm, as well as Zeal and other natural things, may be well used; and being rightly circumstantiated, and subservient to a better Principle, become irreprehensible. Some observe that no great Work of the Brain, that begot much admiration in the World, was ever achiev'd without some kind of Enthusiasm; and the same may be affirm'd of the most transcendently Virtuous and Heroical Actions. If this be true, as I see not but it may, without giving any advantage to Materialists, I can't conceive why we shou'd admit a degree of natural Enthusiasm, social with the operations of

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of the Holy Spirit, and yet deny the injections and operations of Satan in Wicked Persons, under Enthusiastick circumstances. The Doctor's supposition may be allow'd upon the same foot, that encouragement is to Aged and Infirm Persons, who complain of a suspense of that flow of Comforts they had formerly: For tho' God may in an extraordinary manner, sometimes supply these natural defects by more liberal effusions of the Spirit of Consolation, yet this must not be made the Standard of his usual procedure, who commonly works thus, not only with, but according to the State of Nature; and all know how much the flow of Affection depend upon the vigor of the Constitution. I hope this may be said without the least prejudice to the assistances of the Holy Spirit; if not, I utterly abjure the thought with detestation.

pious frauds
Blessed be God, we need no *piæ fraudes* to support our holy Religion, let them use Legends that more need them: No, nor any extraordinary appearances, having recourse to a more sure Word of Prophecy: But still, when a wise and kind Providence condescends to afford us any collateral Evidences, 'tis our Wisdom thankfully to receive and improve such accessional helps to our Faith, and not rudely to baffle and reject them. Satan's Power is much lessen'd since the Preaching of the Gospel; and wou'd to God we made a better use of it; but some talk as if he had little or nothing to do here, and acted no oftner than he appear'd, and appear'd no oftner than meer Fear and Fancy rais'd him. The execrable Crimes of some, make them look like incarnate Devils, and bespeak their infusions, and so declare their existence: But if that be

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not allow'd, I'm sure such enormities demonstrate the monstrous depravity of humane Nature. But the true State of our Case, I take to be like one standing on the Brow of a Precipice; he may tumble by his own weight, but a blast of Wind will set him going sooner. If some Relations in Glanvil, &c. be errant Stories, does it follow all the rest are so? To detect an idle Vagrant, is a useful piece of Charity, as well as relieving a real Object; because the multitude of Cheats discourage Bounty, from a fear of misplacing it: But still it's allow'd better in difficult Cases, to give to two unworthy Objects, rather than send one that's real, empty away. The Allusion is plain, and I wish some rigid Inquisitors would seriously apply it.

I principally address my self to such, who tho' they are loth to be impos'd on, yet are willing to construe just designs fairly: For the sake of such I venture to expose my self to the scoffs of the giggling fraternity, who must have their turn of laughing. To avoid this, I have not been so wary as I might, having in many things consulted Conscience more, than what many will needs call Prudence. Such as desire to form a true judgment of matters here contain'd, shou'd read it through e're they pass their Verdict, at least the Second Part. If after all any doubt, the Day is coming which will evidence matter of Fact here related real truth, and to that I appeal in the Face of all Cavils. I thought it needful in some Cases to quote Authority, since I had none of my own: And sometimes even Truth it self needs some help this way, to keep her in Countenance, and
recom-

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recommend her to some Mens genius. I take the freedom now and then, tho' rarely, humbly to recommend a Book to others, as hoping they may reap the same advantage, if they dare venture their time and pains upon such credit. Why I say so much of the Devil here, will appear hereafter, and I wish all be not too little to convince some obstinate Persons. I most heartily beseech Almighty God to accompany this attempt with his Blessing, which only can inspire it with a quickning Virtue, the great Soul that animates all things: That thus it may some way subserve his Honor and the good of many; and here Centering, I leave my self and this poor Performance, I trust, in safe Hands.

E R R A T A.

PAGE 31. line 2. for *and read that*: pag. 30. l. 22. leave out *a*. p. 91. l. 30. for *and* r. *that*. p. 111. l. 4. for *hint* r. *hints*. p. 114. l. 16. r. *Talons*. p. 165. last line r. *sunk*. p. 164. l. 11, for *effect* r. *affect*. p. 303. l. 7. for *Stake* r. *shake*.

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AN
ACCOUNT
OF SOME
Remarkable Passages
IN THE
LIFE
OF A
PRIVATE GENTLEMAN.
WITH
REFLEXIONS thereon.

In Three Parts.

PART I.

Consisting of the lesser Passages of his LIFE.

I Shall very briefly mention some Matters of lesser Moment, to give the clearer Light to what I chiefly intend. The Receipt of great Mercies highly aggravate Sins, and Sins reflected on, en-
dear Divine Favours; and both compared and exposed to View, imprint a noble Idea
B. of

of the free and boundless Goodness of the blessed God, and a true Representation of the vile Ingratitude of our base, hellish Hearts. In Conformity to these Measures, I'll give some short Specimens, by Way of Introduction, and weave in the rest occasionally, as they more naturally fall in with the Thread of the Discourse.

I was born of pious and religious Parents, who nurtured me in the Fear of God, and instill'd holy Principles into me betimes, which had many kindly Effects. God's Mercy remarkably prevented me perishing in the Birth. I came into the World in a calamitous Season, but God protected me, tho' he knew he cherish'd a Viper in His Bosom; one that would prove too much a Traytor to Him and His own best Interest. Thus admirably free was the Kindness of my blessed Master in my Infant State, when I neither ask'd nor deserv'd his Care.

The same good Hand of Providence attended me as I advanced in my tender Years. I was often very near Death, and after narrowly escaped Drowning; but God signally interposed, as He did afterwards in some dangerous Falls that might have ended my Days, or made them very disconsolate. In this my early Age, Satan and his Instruments began to play their Part, to ruine my Soul; but God kept me from Defilement, when I thought not of my Danger. Not long after, God in his great Mercy begun with me, to convince me of Sin, as I was reading Mr. ^XAllyn's Call to the

+ The Plague
Time A.D.
1665.

X This has
been vastly
instrumental
to others on
of like occasion.

Uncon-

Unconverted: His plain and serious Method was set so home on my Heart, that it fill'd me with Pleasure, to think I was out of Hell; the Torments of which he lively describ'd. This was the first serious, awakening Impression that I remember I felt; for which I now heartily bless God; and tho' I carelessly suffer'd it to wear off in great measure, yet I verily believe, I ne'er quite lost it. Thus did God counter-mine the Devil's Design betimes, and arm me against the Temptations that soon follow'd. And it cost me very dear for not improving this strong Conviction, which I desire all to consider; to excite Watchfulness; to cultivate all such blessed Motions; least they pay as dear for their Neglect, as they'll find at length I did.

None certainly live a few Years, but must pass many Dangers; but so stupid are we for the most part, that we either observe them not, or presently forget them; or sacrifice to blind Fate, or Chance; which is worse, if worse can be: because such foolish Principles are the true cause of our Inobservancy and Forgetfulness. No wonder such as shut God out of their Thoughts, should be heedless and unthankful under all his Benefits, than which nothing certainly can be more base and brutish; to prevent which, is one reason why I here register my own; to take Shame to my self, excite my own Heart, and others to praise and caution; for want of which I have sufficiently smarted.

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While a School-Boy, some base Temptations offer'd in a Vice, which I fear reigns in such Places. To tell of some Crimes, is to teach them, in the Opinion of many, which makes me but hint it. It's possible Divines seldom touch upon it, and that but darkly, for fear of corrupting the Fancy: But private Admonitions are highly requisite; and such as have the Tutorage of Youth, if they neglect them, may one Day be found very deficient in their Duty. The Vice, by what I then observed, may be very epidemick: The Conceit of its Harmlessness, as it's too apt to be reputed by heedless Youth, and the Secresie of Acting it, contribute to its Prevalency. Dark Insinuations are not sufficient to lay in against it; but the Heinousness of the Fact must so be display'd, as may deter, by a full Conviction. This at first amaz'd me; but being frequently repeated, my Aversion gradually abated, till at length it tainted my Imagination, and became the Seminary of speculative Wickedness in another kind; in kindling in my Breast Sparks of Impurity: And tho' they burst not forth, as in others, being coop'd up by Shame, and the Rod of Conscience, yet they smother'd too much within. For want of Consideration I attended not to Purity of Heart, but *Pharisee* like, contented my self in keeping the outside of the Cup clean.

This Want of Heart-Work in Religion, is the true Cause of the many foul Falls of Professors; let all therefore take Warning, that desire to be sincere, and faithfully

fully oppose the Devices of Satan; let them be sure to bar the Door of the Heart, and redouble their Guard, upon all Avenues leading to it; if the Serpent wind in here, he pushes the very Center of our Strength: God principally demands the Heart, and accepts of nothing without it.

One Day, as I ventur'd to pursue an ordinary Diversion, on the *Sabbath*, I met with a grievous Mischance; upon which my Heart smote me, seeing the Hand of God in my Punishment. I ever made Conscience of *Lying*, and being examined, I frankly confess'd my Fault, and what I thought was the Occasion of the Disaster. I remember but two or three deliberate Lies, that I was guilty of; one of which, was most heinously aggravated, by some peculiar Circumstances, thro' the Prevalency of Fear: I acknowledge this to my own Shame, and God's Glory; and as an Occasion to bless him for his restraining Grace, keeping the Principles of my Education so fast about me; like so many Weights, to prevent me quite breaking loose into Extravagancies.

But after all, thro' Carelessness of the Occasions of Sin, being full of Self-Confidence, I fell into Snares; and one Step prepared for another, till by degrees the Gap grew wider, to let in the wild Boar, to ravage and destroy: God often flash'd Terrors in my Face, in his providential Dealings, but I saw not his Hand: Particularly in reading *Caley* of Eternity, some

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Passages were set so home, as to rouse and terrifie me for a Season; they fasten'd not so powerfully, as to be a constant Barrier, yet they did me great Service: Many wear out the Force of their Education, till it becomes a Curse to them, rendring their Guilt more notorious, provoking God to retire the farther; and that it was not thus with me, is owing to a better Principle than my own. God gave me two remarkable Deliverances again; which with all Gratitude and Humility, I mention to his Praise. Oh the vast Pity and Patience of a Holy God towards a provoking, helpless Worm! *What shall I render to the Lord for all his Benefits conferr'd upon worthless me, from Time to Time? O let my Soul bless Thee, and my Life praise Thee, that have so much dishonour'd Thee: ever since I hung on my Mother's Breasts, have I hung on Thee; Thou art my God from my Mother's Belly; let my Praise be continually of Thee.*

Prayr.

As I advanced in Years, I met with more Trouble: God was pleas'd often to check me in the Course of his Providence. A Distemper threatned, which affected me with a mighty Concern, still fearing the worst. I began now to reflect more seriously upon the Vanity and Uncertainty of all Things, but distrusted too much his Providence; fearing, instead of relying and resigning; and yet tempted it, most presumptuously, in other Cases; which exposed me to many real Dangers, and need-
less Fears. Resignation to the Will of God, is no less a Privilege, than a Duty, as e-
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very one will find, that makes the blessed Attainment: 'Tis a begun Heaven in the Soul, and makes it calm, amidst all outward Storms; but he that reposes not his Trust and Confidence in God, must owe very much to his Stupidity; if his Fears are not as boundless as his Fancy: He that fears not as he should; is justly punish'd if he fear, where no Fear is.

All this while I kept close to publick Worship, and secret Duties, in which I was constant, tho' too cold and formal, especially upon every Lapse, which I very sensibly observed. I habituated my self to ejaculatory Prayer, with which I was much delighted; but found a Deadness on my Spirit, whenever I fell by any Temptation, presuming on the Strength of my Resolutions; seeking rather than avoiding Temptations, and tampering boldly, with the Occasions of Sin. This is tempting the Devil, to tempt us, and God to depart, as to my Sorrow I found it; let others take Warning, least they pay dear for their Experience: *Can a Man take Fire into his Bosom, and not be burnt?* Where there's Powder, Men fear a Spark. About this Time Satan haunted me with hideous Injections; but reading Dr. Sibbs's *Bruised Reed*, the Counsels of that holy Man were bless'd for my Relief; and for the present, proved a Shield against those fiery Darts; but fresh Guilt disarm'd me, and gave the Enemy Advantages, which he improved to my Terror; I rather compound-
ing, than resisting him stedfastly by Faith.

I can't but here take notice of the Justice of God, in permitting this kind of Punishment, for my wretched Neglect of Watchfulness, against Temptations that often foil'd me: Since I kept not my Guard at the Post of Duty; 'twas just with him to give me up to the Drudgery of such, as were foolish and vexatious. Let all thus harrafs'd, search their Hearts, and see if some unmortify'd Lust be not the Cause of this Trouble; which if they find, and sacrifice, they may hope the Storm will soon blow over: In the mean while it's better to fight, than fly; to despise, than fear; he tyrannizeth over the Fearful; but sneaks to the Brave, and Resolute: Where Guilt is not at the Bottom, this Method succeeds, by God's Assistance; but that baffled me, in all my Attempts, and encouraged him in his Onsets.

The black Thoughts that pursued me, put me upon dangerous Diversions; I stuck at few, that were not palpably gross; striving thereby to erase those troublesome Idea's that obtruded themselves in Solitude upon me, if not well employ'd; which my Irregularities, much indisposed me to: But when I resolved to take up my Rest in God, I found my Spirit freer, and devout Exercises comfortable: But, alas! thro' the Heat and Precipitancy of Youth, I broke loose again, and my Troubles recurring, I ran upon any Project, I thought might turn the Stream of my uneasie Thoughts; and now I came so near the Brink of the Precipice, that my Feet were slipping, and
nothing

nothing but God's immediate Hand prevented my Fall and Ruine.

O my inexcusable Folly ! to forsake the Fountain of Blessedness, for impure Streams, and broken Cisterns, after such repeated Trials, successively of both ! Lord how low, how very low, is thy fallen Creature sunk !
Lord, what is wretched Man that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of Man that thou shouldst regard him ! O strange Unworthiness ! O amazing Condescension, and Patience ! God warn'd me now by the Death of many, how uncertain my Life was, nay, came closer still ; some Symptoms of the Malady that sweep away so many, fasten'd upon me, and struck me into a mighty Consternation ; but, alas ! God removing speedily the Danger, Security crept upon me. I look'd to second Causes ; too little to the Hand that threaten'd, or deliver'd ; like a stupid Wretch, unaffected with Frowns or Kindnesses.

Let all thus tardy, closely apply this to themselves ; let them know, they may as soon run from themselves as their God ; that nothing can befriend them, while he is their Enemy ; nor comfort, while he frowns : If they neglect his Favours, and Reproofs, they shall severely smart for it, first or last : Idle Excursions, vain Diversions, or what's worse, may give a temporary Relaxation ; but if God intend them good, they'll find their Troubles recur with Force ; as a Current dam'd up a while, rushes with redoubled Violence, the Obstruction once master'd. While you run

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out of God's Way, you fly the only Center of Rest and Safety ; and if in a sinful Course you find settled Ease, and Pleasure ; at the long run, you'll see it one of the forest Judgments : The only sure Way to Peace, is, entirely to quit your Lusts.

I must do my self this Justice, (tho' otherwise, God knows, bad enough) as to own, I allow'd not my self in any evil Course ; but upon every Fall, immediately reassumed Resolutions of Amendment : I observed every Breach of my Integrity, made way for another, by which the Tempter had easier Access to draw me aside : But the Misery of all was, tho' I pray'd and strove too, yet the Presumption of my own Strength, to grapple with Temptation, made me an easie Prey to the roaring Lion. The frequent Experience of my Weakness, did not drive me out of my false Confidence : but I still resumed Hope and Courage, tho' I put to Sea in a crazy Bottom : And this made my Obstinacy inexcusable : My impure Heart caused me to pray formally ; but as much as I drop'd short of Intention in that Duty, so much I exceeded in Self-Dependance. Watchfulness and holy Resolutions, are glorious Duties, and strengthen each the other, but should ever be done in the Strength of Christ, and his holy Spirit. I had the Notion, as many have, but not the Thing, the practical Sense ; for where that is, it breeds Caution, with respect to the Occasions of Sin. I'm perswaded God suffer'd
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me to be baffled, to open my Eyes in this Point, but still I would not see.

Let all therefore suspect themselves in this Matter, it being a Disease so natural : 'Tis in the Best, but reigns in the Worst ; and would to God, I was more clear of it. 'Tis strange to see such as do least, presume they can do most ; and the most holily, humbly confessing their Weakness : But the Wonder may cease, when we consider, Pride and Ignorance is the Root of all Self-Confidence. I ever found this subterfuge very prevalent, and a great Snare to me : viz. that Faith and Repentance, would lick all whole again ; this led me into the sad Circle of Sinning, and Repenting ; the which many run all their Days, till they tumble into the bottomless Pit : And 'twas God's Mercy alone, prevented my sad Fate ; which I desire to acknowledge with a thankful Heart. When I say these Suppositions embolden'd me to Sin, it must be understood, of the Strefs of a Temptation, not as the Result of my cool Thoughts ; for my standing Measures of these Things were quite otherwise.

Happy is the Man that practically understands these three blessed Duties ; of Watchfulness ; Prayer ; and Dependance : Such a one will seldom be foil'd ; for God certainly will be found of one, that thus diligently seeks him, in his own Way. He that redoubles his Watch, may pray in Faith, to derive down Supplies, in every Exigency ; and in the Strength of them, expect assured Success, since God will fulfil

fil his Promises. True Prayer, is the Voice of the real Desires of the Soul ; the Man then that thinks his own Care sufficient, is like to have little of these ; and will be too ready, if he succeed, to sacrifice to his own Net : If such a one then prosper, God must lose his Glory, which he never did, nor will : We may guess then at the Fate of such a Person, who usually miscarries in his Attempts ; but if he reform outwardly, his Heart is little changed, but rather swell'd with Pride.

To be careless under the Pretence of Prayer, and Dependance, is to abuse our selves, and offer the greatest Indignity to God : Is it possible to desire any thing earnestly, and sit still, without suitable Endeavours ? The natural and usual Method of Mens Procedure in this kind, demonstrates their Hypocrisie, and upbraids the Folly of their slothful Pretences. We run naturally from Dangers, and embrace Opportunities for great Advantages : We endeavour in all these Cases, as well as pray, and depend on God's Providence. *Work out your own Salvation, with Fear and Trembling ; for it is God which works in you to will and do of his good Pleasure. Watch and pray,* is the Advice of our dear Lord and Master : He that watcheth not, can't pray, but formally, and his Dependance is meer Presumption. Bad Men fail of making good their Resolutions for want of an inward Principle, and good Men too often, for want of Dependance.

Phil. ii. 12,
13.

Formality in Religion is our Ruine: Had I read the Holy Scriptures, with that Seriousness I should, I had ne'er err'd so fatally; but better understood these great Duties, their Grounds, and Relation, each to the other. He that really makes this Attainment, will find himself no mean Proficient. *Erasmus* tells us from his own Experience, ' That there's little Good to be got, by reading the Scriptures cursorily and carelessly; but he that exercises himself therein constantly and conscientiously, shall find an Efficacy in them, as is not to be found in any other Book whatsoever. Observe my Failings in these Points, and what my Folly cost me, as will appear hereafter.

I Travell'd now abroad, where I escaped many Dangers; and in my Passage home, a very remarkable one: In the midst of the Storm, I form'd a Resolution, ne'er to forget the Mercy, if God would spare me; but I soon basely forgot it, and ne'er solemnly remember'd it, till God awaken'd me by his Judgments: I pray God lay not this Sin to my Charge: O the amazing Goodness of God! and the vile Ingratitude of my hard Heart! I had not been here long, but I fell into Apprehensions my Body was in a declining Condition; and the Danger my Soul was in, then naturally fell under Consideration: The Anxiety of these forebodings, brought me low, and made me very serious: Then God brought to my Mind, the good Counsels I had slighted, my Obstinacy and Forgetfulness of him,

and

*a storm
at sea.*

and my best Interest; I was now fully convinced of the Vanity of the World, and the foolish Projects I had set my Heart upon; I was at the old Game of fair Promises, and good Resolutions, if I recover'd; tho' God knows, they proved too much like his, that vowed a Taper as big as the Mast in the Tempest, to the *Virgin Mary*; but when a-shoar, put her off with a Rushlight.

Consider this ye that forget God, and your selves; your own Promises, and his Deliverances: remember the Vows made in your Distress: *Vow and pay unto the Lord; for he has no Pleasure in Fools.* Observe what this piece of Forgetfulness cost me, when God brought me to a close Reckoning, as he will you, sooner or later: The keener your Desires, the stronger your Vows; and the sweeter were your Mercies, the more fiercely will your Consciences one day sting you, with Reproach, when he awakens them; and the longer he forbears you, the more severely will he handle you: Bethink your selves therefore betimes, and prevent the Storm.

The first time I was press'd hard with Trouble of Mind, was a little before I left England: That which brought me to Extremity, was this Expression of a Friend: *viz.* That we no where read in Scripture, of any that fell into the same Sin, after they had truly repented of it: God strangely set in with it, to humble me, and after much Struggling I got over it. I have often thought this Advice might have been spared,

red, at such a Juncture, when I was low enough, and needed rather Support, than Severities to deject me; but God was wise, and good in permitting it, and carrying me thro' the Terrors that follow'd; both, I hope, did me Service, tho' I made not the Use of them I might and ought.

The Observation I think is true, and let such as make a Trade of presumptuously Sinning and Repenting, apply it to themselves: Such as wilfully and habitually, keep up that Custom, ne'er repented in earnest; and if they go on Jestling, they'll shortly meet with something that will put them past trifling: But let no honest Heart, that may fall in an Hour of Temptation, misapply it: 'Tis a useful Consideration, to keep any from Falling; but by no Means to drive them from their only Remedy: No doubt Instances might be given of such as have fallen into the same Sin, after Repentance; however, that which drives from Christ, Duty and Safety, must be a Temptation from the Devil. In Storms of this kind, it's safer to take up with present Evidences, than puzzle our Heads with what's past and doubtful in so cloudy a Season; beware now of too hasty and severe Conclusions.

I fell now into Temptations about the unpardonable Sin, back'd with some terrible Expressions in Scripture: These harrafs'd my Thoughts exceedingly, and left me no Hole to creep out at, to ease the Anguish of my Mind. I kept all to my self, gave no Vent to my Distress, by imparting my

my Case to any ; which naturally gives some Ease, and is certainly a great Duty ; a means God often owns, by Blessing it with Success: Woe be to him that is alone in this State: it has been the Ruin of many, who have been overborn for want of seconds. Let none therefore make light of this Warning, and presume they can grapple alone with Temptation. The ridiculous, strange, horrid appearance of some Suggestions, makes many ashamed or afraid to expose them, lest they should themselves: but let such consider, that's many times the strongest part of the Temptation which often vanishes upon a disclosure, at least, is moderated: ne'er fear manifesting the Attempts of the Devil ; and honoring God by using proper means ; impart all to an able Minister, or some pious, faithful Friend, and that without delay, before the Temptation fasten. The Rule holds universally, in all sorts of Temptations: to disclose them, is in part to weaken them ; to suppress them, is to redouble their Strength, our Sufferings, and Danger.

What relieved me in great measure, was A. Bishop *Tillotson's* Opinion about the Sin against the Holy Ghost: viz. that it was only committable in our Saviour's time, when the Pharisees ascrib'd what was done by the Spirit of God, to *Beelzebub*, out of pure Malice to our Saviour: but be that as it will, 'tis clear, tho' it seem a Paradox, that Man that fears he has committed this Sin, has no just reason to fear he has: because the Commission of it is ever accom-

panied

panied with Malignity, and Obduracy ; with Hatred of God and Goodness, without any disposition, or concern to return to Duty, and seek Réconciliation. The Texts that troubled me, as leaving no room for Repentance, seem to refer to final Apostacy, where the same Hardness and Aversion is ever concomitant : He therefore that desires to return to God, after his wandering, has no reason to pass this heavy doom against himself ; but may be assured his Lord and Master is as ready to receive him, as he is to come to him, in all his appointed means : *He that comes to me, I will in no wise cast out*, says the Mouth of Truth it self. Awaken'd Spirits raise Scruples, where he makes none, and over act the part of scrupulosity, as before they did that of carnal Security ; and Unbelief has too great a share in both : *The Whole have no need of the Physician, but the Sick ;* Christ came not to save the Pharisaic Righteous, but Sinners : lost in themselves ; that value a Saviour : and the greatest are welcome, if but Penitent and Believing. Men make nothing of Sin, while under the Power of it, but once rouzed, and convinced, they as readily think it unpardonably great ; and 'tis *Satan's* great Artifice to let us see no Sin, or all Sin ; to ruin by Presumption, or Despair : And strangely surprizing and amazing is it, to pass from a State of Insensibility, to feel the load of insupportable Guilt. The only way in this dreadful pressing Case, is, to look up to the true Brazen Serpent, Je-

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fus, the Blessed Son of God, who has more pleas'd him, than we or the whole World have provok'd him: A Reflexion that may give us some glympse of Hope, in the depths of our Distresses.

After this was a little over, other black Scenes presented themselves; whole swarms of Idle Fancies, like the Plagues of *Egypt*, drove in upon me, and Flie-blow'd all my Sacrifices. These discouraged me from holy Duties; miserably distracted me in them; often made me hurry them over; cut them short; or make stands in the midst of them. Thus my Prayers became formal; and Praise in a manner ceased: When I had any freedom, the sense of my Distractions, redoubled my ardency: At length Reading, that had diverted me, as these prevail'd, grew burthensome, so desisting, my distemper'd Imagination made me weary of my Life; Study and Recreations, having lost all their power to divert. In this sad State I passed many Months with little Profit, or Pleasure; fearful Idea's being impressed on my Mind, by the reiteration of these undulations of a rampant Fancy: They devour'd that intention of Mind, which should have been employed in matters of my Duty, and Station. The Devil, my Corruptions, and panic Fears, getting this Ascendant; God mercifully supported me, and kept me from the sad Effects, that often follow. And what still makes it a greater wonder of Mercy, I ran farther from him; who herein had gracious Designs of bringing me nearer:

nearer: Like a sick Man that tumbles for ease by change of Posture, I roll'd from one Vanity to another, but still carry'd with me my Distemper: God hedg'd up my way thus, to reduce me from my Wandrings, and I, instead of compliance, was striving to find new By-paths to run from him: The Center of Rest offer'd to be my repose, but I still follow'd my own Inventions. I shall give some Specimens of these Antick Fancies, to warn others, tho' I expose my self; that they may resist them in time before they get head.

These Whimfies multiply by reception, and over-flow all, if the first Breach in the Bank be not made up quickly: Yielding invites them; Opposition, or slighting them, drives them away: Repentance, Prayer, Reformation of what's amiss, is a Discipline that will tare up by the Roots these Tares; without which other attempts may prove fruitless. The means of Health, Diversions innocent and seasonable, have their use: but without the former, will not do in many cases: For however temper of Body, Education, Crosses, and many other accidents, may render this State complicate; yet sad Experience has taught me, if *Satan* do not work them, yet he works upon them; and improves them to his mischievous Designs. As our Sins give him Advantages, 'twill be our surest course to quit what we can, the Foundation he builds on. This Case, tho' sometimes founded in meer Melancholy, yet I'm persuaded it often proceeds from ano-

ther Cause entirely; and when 'tis purely Natural in its first Cause; I believe it rarely, if ever, finishes its Course, without a mixture of Temptation.

u I know the learned Speculatist, will here drop a smile, and pretend wondrous Pity to a Man under the Power of the *Flatus*; and censure these Sentiments, as meer Delusions; let such know, I have a truer compassion for them, and wish they may ne'er have those feeling Reasons I had, to alter their Opinion; some of which they may meet with a little farther, if they dare take 'em at second hand; the cheapest, tho' not the surest method of Information. I shall therefore discuss this matter no further here, but reserve it for a proper place, where this, and much more will come under consideration, if such positive Gentlemen can a while suspend their Judgments. To mention a few of those ridiculous Fancies that troubled me, which make up a Mystery of Folly and Iniquity.

u Signs and Omens crowd'd in at every Sense: Whatever Superstition had rank'd in the number of portentous significations, strangely affected me: The Tradition of Ignorant People, that make Dreams Oracular; Bats and Owls Prophets; Crows and Ravens, portentive of a Carcass falling: The howling of Dogs, or digging Holes in the Ground, as Signs of Death: A poor Worm in the Wood of a Bench, or Wall, must be a Death-Watch, that clicks dissolution, with as much evidence as a Passing-Bell: The meer Waking Excursions
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of Fancy, must be reputed supernatural Impressions, foreboding some doleful Occurrence. As tho' these were not enough to harrafs and consume the natural Spirits, by continual Agitations, Fancy began to Work without a handle, and mimick Voices in the Air, and Characters upon almost every thing; expressing sad disasters, dismal matters relating to Soul or Body, or both; the more to Torment: So that no Galley-Slave was ever handled worse, than these wild Imaginations did me; ever more or less obtruding themselves upon my Belief, which gave Life to all. But I lost too much time in poring on these black Follies, to spend any more in describing them. I had pass'd by all this in silence, but for a Design of Warning and Relieving others under the same circumstances. Particulars are often most Instructive, and a parity of cases may afford some help, to such as think their's singular, and are shy of calling in any Seconds to the Combat; 'tis for the sake of such, I venture to provoke the Sneer of Mechanists; who can salve every thing by Matter and Motion, and account so, for trouble of Conscience, and Satan's Temptations.

'Tis easy to defie the Winds and Waves a Shoar; and talk of Bravery in a Battle, in a Chimney Corner: Cowards and Sneaks-by's, can do this it may be more emphatically, than the Bold and Brave: But such as have been sorely Wounded, know the Terrors of these Adventures; and carry the remembrance of them to their Graves,

Men of Vegete, Athletick Constitutions ; whose Consciences are as brawny as their Flesh and Muscles, laugh at these things : But when God in his Providence, by severe Afflictions, &c. permits an alteration in the Temperament of their Bodies ; or lets loose the Devil to haunt them, with his frightful Suggestions ; or awakens their guilty Consciences ; they change their Note ; mope in a Corner ; and fear to lye alone ; their Reason, Resolutions, and little Antidotes, all fail. I took my turn of laughing at others, I now heartily Compassionate ; I reason'd and resolv'd against Chimera's, but notwithstanding, the Stream bore me down, and made me fear, after
 I had rally'd all my Forces.

I conclude this Topick with Caution to the Fearless and Censorious ; to the Dejected and Timorous. Let the former remember the slippery Ground they stand on ; let such as stand take heed lest they fall ; what help or pity can the Proud and Pitiless hope for in Distress ? Let the Fearful and Tempted, fly all refuges of Lyes, and put their Trust alone in God, in the regular Use of means ; let them search their Hearts, try their State, whether Guilt, Impenitence, and Unbelief, be not at the bottom of all, more than Distemperature of Body : All other means have been found ineffectual, when this Worm has been found gnawing at the Root of Peace. Innocent People, I mean comparatively, have fallen into this Condition by influxion of Melancholy, I readi-

Iy grant; but then a little Physick removes it: Where the case is Stubborn, and eludes the force of long Attempts of this kind, the Cause may be suspected to lie deeper. Had I taken the Advice I give, I'm confident I had been successful; but Guilt made me fear Dying, and so every thing.

Take heed how you give way to Sin, and dishonor God, by listening to Superstitious Fears: Your Breath and Souls are only in his Hand; Fear and Trust him alone, and defie the Devil. Fight a-while and he will Succour you, and make you ample amends for bearing the brunt of the Conflict; for your Love and Loyalty to him. See if you have not walk'd in the Vanity of your Minds; taken too great liberty to indulge the Idle frisks of a luxuriant Fancy; or defiled your Souls by acting something sinful in the dark Chambers of Imagery: Consider whether you may not read your Faults in your Punishment. If any thing of this appear, Censure and Humble your selves under his Hand, that he may exalt you in due time; as infallibly he will, if you are faithful to Him, and your Selves.

To be kept in Bondage by these vain Fears, is slavery, more suitable to the state of a dark Heathen, than an enlightened Christian. 'Tis to Worship the Echoes of Fancy; and cringe to cruel Idols of our own making; 'tis to stand in awe of what's worse than nothing; to deny God his Fear, and Sovereignty; 'tis a

piece of fealty to the Devil. God for-
give me my Sin and Folly; whose Justice
I acknowledge in suffering me to be toss'd
from Wave to Wave of this kind; and that
Faculty to prove the Instrument of my
Torment, that I had let rove at all Ad-
ventures, into endless mazes of Vanity.

I ran at this time, into Company I thought
would divert me: And being warn'd by
a faithful Friend, of the danger I was in,
from a particular choice I made; the
good Counsel was neglected. These ve-
ry Persons drew me into a promiscuous
Conversation, which brought our Purity
and Reputation into great hazard; and
'twas solely owing to God's Providence, not
at all to our Prudence, both were not lost.
I mention this to reflect Honor, on the
preventing Goodness of a Merciful God;
to take shame to my self, and deter o-
thers from making light of the kind Ad-
monitions of their Pious and Experien-
ced Friends; a thing too common, but
very fatal; and a wonder of Mercy it is,
it proved not so to me. Be the more
cautious here, as their Authority is the
greater over you; whose Advices carry
the force of a Command with them: To
reject such, is to add Disobedience to
Folly; and usually it is as severely Pu-
nish'd in the course of God's Providence:
There are sad Precedents, enough to a-
larm any that are not perfect Strangers
to Consideration.

The Plague certainly is not more Contagious, than Ill Company; it's Poyson insensibly, so the more surely insinuates it self: Besides this natural disposition, to suck in the Breath of corrupt Society, God often judicially withdraws from such, as make these bold Adventures, to Chastise their Presumption: Thus they lose the good Principles they had, being over-powered by the prevalency of those ill dispositions, that at first seduc'd them, to take pleasure in such polluting Communications. He that loses his good Name, will lose his capacity of doing good in the World; and he that's unconcern'd in that point, is eaten up of brutish Self: He that Associates himself with Wicked Men, will lose his Reputation, if not his Innocency: *He that walks with Wise Men, shall be Wise; but a Companion of Fools shall be destroyed.* Prov. 13.20. How vain is it then to pretend to Purity in Vicious Company? Or to Reform, till such Impediments are quitted? Till this Rule be observed, Men are not good in earnest; nor are such as are Bad, really disposed to forsake their Evil Courses, whatever they promise others or themselves.

'Tis usual for Young People, of both Sexes, to Associate for Frolick and Merriment; they may be Innocent in their first Designs, but can't assure themselves their Practices shall conclude so. Intimacy breeds Familiarity, till wanton Dalliances commence, which often end sadly; especially where but Two Persons engage, privacy giving nerves to the Temptation. I fell
into

into the Snare in much Company, and God strangely kept me untainted, even as to my Thoughts; whose Goodness I desire to look back upon with wonder, and at my own Folly; who never saw my Danger till I had past it. Dread these Projects, as you would taking Fire into your Bosoms; if you are not Consumed thus, yet you may be Scorch'd: I was loth to take this Advice on trust, but wish'd most passionately since, I had; when in after Adventures, I expos'd my self too boldly in the same way.

Abstaining from all appearance of Evil, and following things of good Report, are Apostolical Injunctions; little comporting with these kind of Practices. And such as plead for, or allow them, would be hard put to it, to comment fairly on these, and many more Texts in Scripture. *Job* made a Covenant with his Eyes, against all roving Looks of this kind: How tardy then must such needs be, who throw open all avenues of the Senses, to transmit Poyson to the Soul? These Assignations, or what else you call them, of this Tendency, are justly censur'd by the Verdict of all sober Judgments: And were not the thing simply disallow'd of in the determination of the best, yet the ill consequences more or less in these Cases render them very Criminal.

How many engage their own, and others Affections, by these rash Intimacies, to the Prejudice, if not the Ruin, of one, or both? Frothy Discourse, Vanity and Flattery, is usually the Life of the Conversation, if not
much

much worse: Much precious Time is spent; and dispositions wrought for the loss of more, till a Habit of Idleness and vain Frolicks, consummate the Mischief: Thus all serious Thoughts and Desires languish, the Affections grow loose and carnal, disrelishing God, and Spiritual Objects: This is generally the best of these Converses. 'Tis very difficult to keep the Imagination and Heart undefiled, and great Impurities have follow'd; this is the natural course of these Adventures, and when otherwise, it's owing to God's Care, not our own; and we have no reason to expect such Merciful Preventions in our Rambles; but the contrary, to be given up to the swinge of our Corruptions: Which, as it should teach us to adore the condescensions of a gracious God in his Interpositions; so to admire our own Folly, in venturing to undo our selves, and provoke so kind a Master.

The sense of my own Danger, and God's Goodness, in Steering me over these Sands, has engag'd me to say the more on this Subject: And such as will not be advis'd, but frame Excuses, will one time or other have their Eyes opened by their own Experience: If any demand a Latitude to consult the Tempers, and agreeableness of Persons by these Familiarities, in order to Marriage: If this be a real Plea; what has been said, was ne'er intended against it; If meer shift and pretence, as many times it is; it's a strong Temptation; and as the Hypocritical pretext redoubles the Guilt; so it may
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the Punishment, in a judiciary way, one time or other.

Others are ready to Reply: We have no propensity to Lewdness; our Constitutions, or the regular Discipline we are habituated to, put us out of danger. Neither Natural Dispositions, nor Moral Attainments, can secure us, out of the Path of Duty: These alone do not render us absolutely safe at any time; much less in our Wandrings, as many have found to their Cost at last; who stood, it may be, some shocks of Temptation; and thought themselves out of Danger; measuring their Stability by what is pass'd, or present. He that truly loves Purity, avoids the Occasions of Sin, as he would all approaches to Infectious Places: God's Grace alone is our Security, which we forfeit, while we tempt his Providence: Whatever have been our past Successes, which may render us fearless, the critical Minute may come, we may live to Repent of all our Days: Such Allegations have I met with, very angrily maintain'd.

Some time before I made these Excursions; God was pleased to bring me into such Distress, that I apprehended my self near Death: Then did the Vanity of the World appear to me, in lively Colours; and the Excellency of being Useful, and glorifying God. These Thoughts made deep Impression upon me, and convinc'd me fully of my Folly, in shunning good Employ: But, alas! all soon wore off, as the Cloud dispers'd; and I by no means lived up to the
sense

sense I had of Things, in the Day of Visitation. Let such as never were under any pressing Circumstances of this kind, know assuredly, they'll think very differently from what they do in a time of Ease and Safety; let them then endeavour to do that Seriously and Rationally, that a dark serious Hour will put them upon, and make them wish they had done sooner. And let such as have had these Warnings, and neglect them; consider their Danger: They must expect sharper Methods, as I found to my Astonishment; or if God let them alone without a Jog; the Day is coming he will reckon with them once for all; the Issue of which will be most deplorable.

About this time, God was pleas'd to snatch away an intimate Friend, by a sudden Stroke: He gave me excellent Advice, and a particular charge to quit the Company I kept; and forbear, especially, those dangerous Assignations I engag'd in; for whatever I might pretend, 'twould prove but frivolous. He set a high Value on the Ministry he had despised, which indeed deserves a peculiar Honor, as one of the most glorious Employments under Heaven. A little after, I lost another excellent Friend, who seal'd this short and Solemn Advice to me, with his dying Breath; viz. That whatever I neglected, I should be sure to keep close to God: These serious Admonitions made strong Impressions upon me at first, but gradually less'n'd, till in a manner I quite forgot them; which negligence brought a terrible Storm upon me at length,
that

that almost consumed me. I wish all under such Warnings, would look upon them as the Voice of God; conjuring them to Amend and be Serious; for certainly 'tis no less at such Seasons, tho' Men be the Instruments and Organs: The Obligation to Observance will be found as strong one Day, and the Punishment of the Neglect as severe; besides the Contempt cast upon the Serious Pathetic Exhortations of a dying Friend: Some are scrupulous to a nicety, about fulfilling the Will of the Dead; as to just distributions of Effects left to their dispose; and many matters of far less concern: 'Twere to be wish'd all would be as Conscientious in Receiving and Observing the dying Counsels of their Friends; which lay as just a claim to their Regard, as any thing. Their affectionate Concern for their true Interest, can't be doubted of; and they form then the truest Judgments of things. To resist all this, indicates a most Brutish Folly and Ingratitude; and first or last, will meet with a suitable Retribution.

Don't halve the matter; and think you take Advice, when you comply somewhat, as I did; nor presume too much of your future Steadiness, by the Cogency of the first Impress, which deceives many: But beg of God to set it home upon your Hearts, and revive it in his Providence, when it decays: and often seriously reflect upon it, till it warm your Affections, and rouse you up to a conformity. The want of this proved very pernicious to me, tho' occasioned

oned not so much by Diversions, as black Thoughts, ~~and~~ diverted me from profitable Seriousness; and did me incredible Mischief; though God over-ruled them at the long run, strangely to my Advantage, nothing being impossible to him.

that

Thus dropping my Watch, I affected my old Companions; and God suffered them to attempt even to poison my natural Affections in some particulars; for my unnatural neglect, of the Advice of my Friends: and tho' they succeeded not, yet at last they seduced me, to see a Play, and led me into other Temptations; but God kept me. I had an Awe before upon me, and fear'd it as forbidden Fruit; but thus unhappily enter'd; I soon found the way thither my Self. By these Methods I greatly provok'd God, which encreas'd horrors of Conscience; and these again prepared me for new Attempts, to divert these Agonies: and this sad Circulation must have ended dreadfully, had not God been superabundantly Merciful to me. Here lay the Misery of my Mistake; I thought to get rid of my Fears and Fancies, by running from God; which was only to be effected by running to him: a most fatal and common Error. Let others grow Wise by my Folly, and keep their Standing by my Falls.

I endeavour'd all I could, to shake off those troublesome Clients, that hitherto molested me. I tri'd variety of Company, and went now and then to Plays; but all to no purpose: all prov'd but like a
Dose

Dose of *Opium*, that stupifies the Faculties a while, but removes not the Cause of the Distemper ; so after a short Truce of Drowsiness, the Lion roused with more fierceness to the On-set : nay, many times I felt his Claws, when I thought my self out of his reach ; amidst these petty Diversions. Let others, who for want of Experience, entertain a fond Opinion of these treacherous Expedients, take heed how they trust to such broken Reeds, as not only fail them, while they lean upon them, but pierce them thro' with new Sorrows. By these Methods the Seeds of Goodness began to languish within me ; and I grew soon into a neglect of Ordinances : Part of the Lords-day I spent in Reading a Sermon at home ; an ordinary custom, I fear, with many ; but very pernicious : For the Man that casts Contempt upon an Ordinance God has Instituted, can't rationally expect a Blessing in private ; while humor, not necessity, makes him absent himself, from Honoring God, by joining in the Publick Service of his Church. Men give themselves an easy Dispensation while God calls for Order and Subjection ; and they fare accordingly : Were that true, none can be sure of, tho' they found their Excuses upon it, *viz.* that they can read a better Sermon at home, than they shall hear at Church ; I say, were they morally sure of this ; yet it's no Apology : For should all run away with this Whim, as there's the same Reason for it ; What must become of the Publick Worship of God ? most acceptable

ble to him; who *Loves the Gates of Zion,*
more than all the Dwellings of Jacob, Psal. 87.

2. *Unita vis fortior*: the United Prayers and Praises of God's People, when their Hearts and Hands are jointly lifted up together; as the one are more prevalent; so the other, prove a more grateful Sacrifice; as they more glorifie him. God's Blessing is the Life of our Spiritual as well as Temporal Successes: and he can make a mean Discourse in publick, more profitable, when I attend out of sense of Duty, with hope and dependance; than the best in Private, when I'm out of the way of his Blessing, and don't eye his Authority. We have this Treasure in Earthen Vessels, that the Power may appear to be of God: He that depends only upon means, tho' regular, will find himself mistaken; much more will he that's irregular in his Choice and Dependancy both: Let all therefore repute Suggestions of this nature, as Snares and Temptations. If they'll trace these pretences home, they'll find Laziness, or a secret loathing of the Word of God, at the bottom of them: and no wonder the full Soul loaths the Honey-comb; and such as have lost their Appetite, play with their Meat: I have said the more, because I think this, tho' a common, yet no small Fault.

I lost ground by this Practice, tho' I ne'er dar'd to Prophane any part of that holy Day; no, not at my worst state. Here the Principles of my Education stuck close to me, and did me great Service.

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Let this Success encourage all that have Young ones under their Charge, industriously to inlay them with good Principles betimes. Spiritual, searching Discourses, I did not so much favor, as meer Moral Doctrines; tho' God knows too Immoral my self: The fond hopes I conceived of the Strength of my good Resolutions, render'd them grateful. *Seneca's Morals*, *L' Strange's Comment on Aesop*, I doted on; and read them on the Lord's-Day, with wondrous delight. Reading one Day, a Book Entitled, *Religious Perfection*, treating of the Love of God; and setting the Mark of it too high, for my reach, it alarm'd me; but instead of Prayers and Endeavours, to wind up my Soul to this Standard, I did, as many I fear do, make the Doctrine stoop to my Corruptions, by supposing the Author carry'd the matter too high; that such Expressions did not so much relate to the Essence, as the Perfection of Love: and little or none of that Sacred Ambition being in my Heart, I soon baffled the Suggestion. *The Saints Everlasting Rest* frightened me so much in Reading a few Pages, that I threw it by, not caring to meddle with it after, till I came to my self; a piece of Folly, I have heard others were guilty of before me.

These were black Indications of the Unsoundness of my Heart. Where the holy Fire, of the true Love of God, burns bright, it grieves it burns no brighter; and desires the Flame may advance, till it be entirely offer'd up a whole Burnt-Sacrifice;

Dr. Lucas.
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fice. The nearer we thus approach God, the faster we still move towards him; as every thing moves the nearer its Center. Faith shews us the amiable Perfections of God, which enamor the Soul; and the stronger that grows, it brings down the more Oil, to feed those Seraphic Flames, till they lick up and consume base, low, narrow Principles; till corrupt Self expire in the Love of God. Sincere Love, is no doubt accepted, tho' it come not up to this Perfection; a Spark of Fire, is as truly such, as the greatest; and a Blessed Promise is made, even to *smoking Flax*; the Effect appears, while the Cause lies hid, rak'd up in Ashes: As the least Spark, has the true Properties of Fire, so where the least true Love of God is in the Soul, tho' conceal'd as a Spark in Embers, yet it carries with it the genuine property of Divine Love; extensive Wishes and Desires. He then that feels none of these impatient Sallies, no glowings towards a Flame, but contents himself with Attainment; and desires the Notion of Love may be carried no higher, but smoother in the Ashes, has reason to suspect, his is more Glow-Worm Heat, than that of true Fire.

It may be said of him that dreads a trying searching Book, that he is loath to have his Wounds search'd; and so is like to die of them, in a short time. A Sore is easily skinn'd over, while it remains unsound at bottom: Some affect none but such as Prophecie soft things; Which say to the Seers, See not; and to the

Prophets, Propheſie not unto us right things; ſpeak unto us ſmooth things, Propheſie deceits; Iſai. 30. 10. They fear not Death, if they may enjoy the Pleaſure of being tickled into it. Men deal not thus barbarouſly with their Bodies, but venture Pain for Health; will ſuffer Cauterizing or Amputation, to ſave Life or Limb: and yet will venture Eternal Torments, rather than not ſit ſoft and eaſy here; as if true Peace of Conſcience, and the Hopes of Eternal Bleſſedneſs, were not able to recompence the Terrors of an awaken'd one; and the Pangs of the new Birth. Where this temper of Mind reigns, it's a ſure Sign of a Rotten Heart: as ſure as Delight in the moſt Rouſing and Spiritual Truths, is of an upright renewed Soul. He that deſires to know the true State of his Caſe, is in earneſt to have it mended, and ſo far is ſincere: And he that's beſt pleaſed with the moſt refin'd and ſpiritual Truths, it's a Bleſſed Sign he has a counter-part in his Heart; a ſpiritual Senſory, to perceive ſpiritual Things, only ſpiritually diſcerned: For this reaſon, the natural Man can't diſcern them, we are told, 1 Cor. 2. 14. tho' Learned and Moral; for they are Fooliſhneſs to him: but the Spiritual Judgeth all things: as it is added in the 15th verſe. Some Speak and Write, as if the Doctrines of the Goſpel were upon the ſame level with the Precepts of *Pythagoras* and *Epictetus*; and Chriſt and his Church were no more a Myſtery, than a Philoſopher and his Scholars; accounting any
Doctrinē

Doctrine a Peg above a meer Moralist, meer Enthusiasm, Mystick Cant, and unconceivable Nonsense. I here implead my self, and stand first in the Front, to do Penance; let none then be offended, but let all that forget God and themselves, in any of these respects as I have, seriously consider these things, and what follow.

Going on at this rate, I intermitted the Sacrament above a Year, and had dwindled quite into security, I fear, had not God suffered Melancholy, as I then reputed it, to prevail and agitate me with strange unaccountable Fears. He seem'd now to abandon me, and leave me in the very Mouth of Temptation; I was accosted with such, as I ne'er felt before, even to Infidelity; suggested to me by an intimate Acquaintance; one of strong Parts: But as bad as I was, God kept me in this Point impregnable; which I mention to the glory of his Free Grace, tho' a Rebel against him, and a Coward in his Cause. I rejected his Proposal with Contempt and Silence; he had mettle in a bad Cause, and I wanted it too much, in one of the best. But at another time, when he spoke some slighting Words of the blessed Sacrament, in the Presence of some I thought he might injure; God help'd me to set upon him with Zeal and Courage, so as to silence him. This poor Gentleman seem'd to be under the Power of very different Impressions, at several Seasons; at one time he would vent Sceptic Principles, in his Frolicks and airy Moods; in

his Afflictions, often express himself seriously: He seem'd by what fell from him on a sudden in Conversation, to be under strong Conflicts, between Convictions and Unbelief: the one appearing more in Adversity, the other in his Prosperity.

He gave me some very pregnant Instances of Apparitions, where he himself was both an Eye and an Ear-Witness of some strange things that pass'd. I had, God forgive me, but feeble Notions of the great things of Religion, at this time, and it caus'd some melancholy Apprehensions, when I reflected on my negligence and unfaithfulness to him. But God is Wise and Good, while we are wanting to our Duty; and intends us good while we desert and betray his Cause, out of the superabundancy of his unmerited Grace; which should make us adore him, and hate our base selves. Had I enter'd the Lists oftner, it's probable he might have endanger'd me at such a Season; and I done him no Service. However God might justly refuse me the honor of pleading for him; and the other the benefit of such a faithful freedom; and that in anger to us both; for our heinous Provocations of a different kind.

I shall end this Digression in a word about the Death of this Gentleman. He was very well in the Evening, and fell into a Discourse of some Atheists: He Instanced in *Hobbs* and some others, concluding thus, they are gone to their place:
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The next Morning he fell Ill, and dy'd in few Hours : He had small Warning ; and his Case admitted of little Reflexion. Some good Use may be made of these Passages if they be duly weigh'd ; the inducement prevalent with me to insert them, together with the Contexture of some Actions of my own, that ran parallel.

Hence learn, what a peculiar spite the Devil has at the holy Sacrament, while he employs his Factors to run it down, all they can. We may be sure that's highly useful, he so much maligns and opposes : it's dangerous to converse with such Men, lest we admit their Poison, or contract Guilt, by not duly opposing them : To prevent both Dangers, we may see the Benefit of being well grounded in the Principles of Religion, and of a conformable Practice : And how true that Scripture is, Luke 16. 31. *If they believe not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they believe tho' one rose from the Dead.*

While matters were at this pass, it happen'd I stood in need of the direction of an old Friend, in some matters of Importance. He took an opportunity, faithfully to reprove me for going to Plays. I took fire immediately, demanding a Proof of their Unlawfulness, and insolently stood at defiance with him. He very wisely and pacately let the matter drop ; I suppose, apprehending me not in a Temper to receive good Advice ; which made him suspend his Reasons, till a fitter season, which ne'er came ; he dying quickly after.

O my Extravagant, Wild, Brutish Passion, what a precipitate thing is Vice! what a Suffusion does it bring upon the Mind, that we can't discern our own Interest, nor the kindness of a Friend! which leaves behind it, scarce a spark of common Prudence, or good Nature; but thrusts a Man upon a breach of good Manners, upon hating and opposing his best Friends; and loving and admiring his Enemies and Flatterers: How true is that saying of the

Prov. 12. 1. Wise-Man: *He that hateth Reproof is Brutish:* And how narrowly did I escape the just Vengeance that follows its Contempt? Such vile Ingratitude! *He that hateth Reproof shall die,* Prov. 15. 10. And *He that*

Prov. 29. 1. *being often Reproved, hardens his Neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without Remedy.* God himself Reprov'd me often, and Friends; and how near I was to Ruine, will appear at last. Let Friends reprove, whatever discouragements they meet with, but let it be a Word in Season, watch the fittest time. He that does it may miss his End, but will assuredly have his Reward. Tho' his Advice seem bury'd under the Clods, yet he may live to see the Seed quicken, rise, and fructifie into a Plenteous Harvest; or it may Spring up when his Head is laid: While he is enjoying the Fruit of his labour of Love, in his pious Endeavours, with the most High; his Friend below, may be Reaping the blessed effects of his Advice while on Earth.

Thro'

Thro' the boundless Mercy of God, I'm
 a Precedent of this happy Case, as many
 have before me, to encourage Attempts of
 this nature: And none prove such fast
 Friends, as those do to their faithful Re-
 provers, that are thus brought to God and
 themselves. With what pungency of Re-
 gret did I reflect upon my base self, when
 I was awaken'd into a sense of my unkind
 usage of my best Friends? Whoever you
 are that read these Lines, if you prove tar-
 dy here; remember the Day is coming,
 which will be a Day of Feeling these things,
 as sure, as 'tis now of Reading these Lines;
 and then if God forgive you, you'll scarce
 be able to forgive your selves, when this
 Odious Crime shall appear in its true and
 lively Colours. *Correction is grievous to him,* Prov. 15. 10,
that forsaketh the way; but remember some-
 thing more grievous follows, even Death.
 Consider well now the Gripes and Twin-
 ges, the fiery keen Reflexions that will
 one Day fasten and torment thee: When
 in the depth of Horror and Misery, thou
 shalt say, *How have I hated Instruction, and*
my Heart despised Reproof? These Fruits of Prov. 5. 12,
 Disobedience to the Voice of our Instru- 14.
 ctors, will be found exceeding bitter; pass'd
 all thought vexatious; believe it in time.
 The deeper your carnal Security, the more
 exquisitely Tormenting will be your Sensa-
 tions, when the stupid fit is over: You'll
 take matters of infinitely less Moment
 upon trust; dread the thought of running
 this terrible hazard. Reflect seriously on
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To be without God in the World, is our degeneracy in full proportion; and to alienate our selves from him, is the greatest and truest Sacrilege. Dr. Which. pag. 300. Vol. 1.

the forlorn brutish State you are in: You can't reject the pious Counsels of your best Friends, till you have abandon'd God; which is an Act of the highest Injustice, springing from the deepest degeneracy.

Bethink your selves; it's a dreadful thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God; if Warnings be multiplied upon you to no purpose, the Day is coming, your Plagues will be wonderful. If you have a Spark of Reason or Gratitude left, I conjure you by all that's Sacred and Humane, relent at the Intreaties of your mournful Relatives, who would be glad to Weep Tears of Blood; nay, let it out of their very Hearts, would it but Thaw your Frozen Souls. Remember if you go on, the Almighty will be as inexorable when you cry for Mercy, when he shall bring *Destruction upon you as a Whirl-wind, Laugh at your Calamity, and Mock when your Fear comes.* O that I had the Rhetoric of an Angel to persuade! O that my Words might carry as much Terror with them, as the reality I once suffered, struck into the very Center of my forlorn Soul. But full well I know, neither Angelic Exhortations; nor the most pathetic from Men; nor the sight of Devils, will do the Work, till God strike in with the finger of his Spirit; then the Rocks shall melt, and the Mountains become a Plain.

Prov. 1. Read that Chapter seriously.

Lord! stir up thy mighty Power and come among us: Honor a returning Prodigal, a weak worthless Instrument, to awaken some

some poor Sinner , for thy dear Son's sake. *Amen.*

I now was near the finishing Stroke ; very near sitting in the Seat of the Scorn-er, the grand Accomplishment of Wick-edness. Falling into Ill-Company, that ridiculed Religion, and every thing Seri-ous ; I began to comply with the Hu-mor, so far as to laugh with them for Company : Either out of base Flattery, and fordid Compliance, to avoid the Im-putation of Singularity ; or else to quaff away a fit of the Spleen, as I then deem'd it.

This is a great Snare I'm confident to many, that dare not make bold with Sa-cred things in their own Expressions ; yet for want of serious Recollection and an awe of God on their Spirits, venture to abet prophanity in the manner I did ; little apprehending the horrid Provoca-tion they offer the Almighty, in abetting this Cursed Temper, by any encouraging gesture or demeanour : This is not only assenting, bad enough ; but giving a Plau-dite to the Performance, to excite the Humor farther. How dear many pay for some bold Sayings of this kind, and others for thus sharing in their Guilt, is too lit-tle thought of ; in which frequently there's little Wit, but much surprizing Impudence.

Men are not only thus involv'd in Guilt, by partaking in other Mens Sins, but are in great Danger of Learning to lisp af-ter them, till they commence Teachers of
Blasphemy

Blasphemy themselves. I'm sure they provoke God to give them up, and then I know nothing that can hinder it: And this has proved oftner the Case of many, than we are ordinarily aware of. An Instance of which, I could give in one, who learn'd this Trade, by long liking and laughing at prophane Jest. I saw this poor Wretch die in great Horror; when the Judgments of God overtook him, as they did very remarkably, he was confounded at the sight of his Guilt, and made fair Promises: Prophanity, as is usual, drove him down the Stream, into the dead Sea of Impurity; let others take Warning. Our danger lies here; we venture without Consideration, into bad Company, presuming upon the steddiness of our Principles: This Self-confidence relaxes our Guard, and so for want of Caution, in time we begin to like the Converse: Impressions we at first receive with Aversion, grow at length familiar; Fear, Shame, or base Flattery, having first made us sheepish and compliant: In time, what we like, we begin to practise, and so on, till the matter grow consummate. The Psalmist begins his holy Instructions with a lively description of this Process. *Blessed is the Man that Walks not in the Counsel of the Ungodly, nor stands in the way of Sinners, nor sitteth in the Seat of the Scornful.* 'Tis a gradation very expressive of the progressive Motion of a Sinner, till he advance to the highest Form of Wickedness; He that walks with the Wicked,

Psal. I: I.

is in a fair way to take up his standing Principles, and then take up his sitting with the Scornful; to banter Religion, and make a mock of Sin, and the Judgments that follow it.

Nothing short of the Power of a Merciful God, could now rescue me. What can resist his Power and Love, when he thinks fit to display them, in the defence of the most unworthy? How did his Patience now run into long-sufferance! How did the glory of his free Grace, shine forth in its Lustre! What Tears of Sorrow and Confusion are sufficient to bewail my Folly and Ingratitude? What Songs of Praise? What Obedience? And all other expressions of Love and Duty are a fit return to the Almighty for his Mercy, that endures for ever.

As I made hast to destroy my self, my blessed Master in tender Pity hung the more Weights upon me, increasing the Load very observably, as I did my perverseness; tho' at that time I had no sense of it, but rather fretted at my Disappointments, that I could not have my Swinge with others, but must be cramp'd with uneasy Thoughts, that imbitter'd all my sinful Diversions. O happy Rebukes; welcome you loving Frowns; thrice welcome you merciful Severities. I Worship Thee, I Praise Thee, I Glorify Thee, O Father of Mercies, for thy great Love in thy Son Jesus Christ, and all Blessings deriv'd to me thro' him; particularly for all thy dark and dismal dispensations of Providence

Pr.
for a good
pray

dence sanctified to me: O produce in me an utter abhorrence of Sin Everlastingly.

+ God now cast me on my Back, and forced me to look up to his angry Countenance, and at the same time to peep by serious Thoughts into the horrors of the Pit of Darknefs. I was confin'd now more to a Bed of Terrors, than any other Distemper; tho' all was attributed to the Power of the Spleen, and Remedies were applied accordingly: My own apprehensions were the same. I was encompass'd with Amazement, and continually expected Death, and what might follow. In a very few Days I got the brunt over, by God's Permission, before the effect of Medicines could be supposed to take place, which in Cases of pure Melancholy, are seldom effectual till after a long Course; it being a most tedious obstinate Distemper, as the Learned very well know.

Sad and Perplexing Thoughts (tho' not in that extremity) still hung about me; and being very Serious, I imparted what most troubled me, to a Divine I could be free with. God Bless'd his Instructions much to my Relief: Tho' my Heart was not right with him, yet he indulg'd me, and relax'd my Terrors, while I pursued any Measures pleasing to him. The imparting such Secrets to a Friend, has a natural tendency to give some ease, as many have experienced, who have found their Doubts resolv'd in the very disclosing them; especially when acting thus out of a Principle of Duty; Confessing their Faults, Honoring the Ministry,

nistry, engaging their Prayers; which united may prevail, when our own alone, may not, as is clear in the case of *Job* Praying for his Friends, and other Instances in Scripture. 'Tis the nature of these Sores to fester and throb, if they are not opened in time. *Confess your Faults one to another, and Pray one for another.*

Jam. 5. 16

I promised fair in my Illness, what I would be, and do, if I got over it; and accordingly began well, was very Warm and Serious in the Improvement of every opportunity, while my Troubles gave me respite. But alas! the sense of danger pressed me harder than the heinousness of my Guilt, which was one great reason, why I retain'd not these Impressions: For after the extremity was over, I thought to get rid of the remains of my troublesome Thoughts, by running to my old Diversions: a most pernicious Course, which many follow to their utter Ruin. For either God redoubles his Strokes to lash them home, or at length comes utter Excision. Had I now been truly humbled, and in earnest turn'd to God, I had avoided a dreadful hazard, and severe Discipline; which I beg all to take Warning by, and ne'er to rest satisfied with a few good Wishes in Distress, but consider this is the accepted time, the Day of Salvation: *Acquaint now therefore thy self with God, and be at Peace, so good shall come unto thee.* But remember, Frights and Fears are but Preparatives to this, not the thing; which must be the result of serious deep Thoughts,

Thoughts, which God now expressly calls you to. If you trifle or elude the force of this Summons; your good Moods and Intentions will all come to nothing, like the Morning Cloud and early Dew, that soon pass away: So will leave you in a far worse case than they found you, tho' you may make a shift to frolick away the Thoughts of it for the present.

After this awakening Providence, I resum'd my former practice of going to the Sacrament; but still interloping between Vice and Virtue, my disorderly Walk after such Solemn Engagements alarm'd me still more. When the Storm blew hard from this quarter, I presently cast Anchor upon the firm bottom of my good Resolutions. Upon this poor Security, I boldly put to Sea, tho' I often found, they had not been proof against the smallest gusts of Temptation: There seems something of this, very incidental to Mankind; learn therefore to suspect your selves.

I ran my Head now often into a Play-House, to turn the stream of my Thoughts. Plays and frothy Company, tho' diverting for the present, yet left me more Sad: nay often in the midst of my grinning Laughs, I felt my Heart heavy; and often Stabs from Conscience: Yet was I so Mad, as to repeat these baffled Experiences. The scandal and danger of being drawn in, kept me from talking to Masks, as many do, and so are decoy'd by the Witchery of that Converse; contrary to
their

their first Intentions ; which possibly aim'd only at a little loose Talk. But I Riding thus daringly into the Devil's Quarters, was once accosted by one of them very impudently ; which startled me, and fill'd me with wonder at the height of Impudence some of that Sex were arriv'd at. As they pretended to Prayers once in a Play ; I had so much Sense left, as to turn my Back upon such an act of prophanity. Another time, in the midst of a Play, I was impressed with such horror of Mind, at I could not tell what, that I was forced to leave the Place, tho' I struggled long to shake it off ; but to no purpose ; it growing upon me, till I had quitted the House. These Warnings, and many more, I wrestled with, which I imputed to odd accidents, and fits of the Spleen ; so bore up against them. I saw nothing of God's Hand in them, but was stupid as to any true sense of these things, or their Causes, any farther, than as meer Notions floating in my Brain, received by Tradition.

I confirm'd my self in these Practices, from the Example of others I had a good Opinion of ; comparing my self with others, worse than my self, I hugg'd a Delusion as I fear many do : Many other Idle Reflexions I made, to make my self easy. Thus besotted was I, till God was pleas'd to awaken me with his Thunder, which was now hasting apace towards me. A little before the Onset, I had by one step of familiarity after another, brought my

E self

self to the very brink of the deep Ditch so few recover from: Deliverance from which, was as strange, as was my mad Presumption, in so near approaches to so great a Danger.

I shall add no more, but urge a few plain Arguments against Plays: Much has been said on this Topick, with as clear and convincing Argument as the Light, but God knows with too little success, Men resolving not to be reclaim'd: Examples are most Instructive, and when Men see the Judgments of God driving others from their Evil Courses, 'tis to be hop'd some may take Warning. However, since my Practice approv'd them, I think it my Duty to acknowledge my Folly, and warn the Careless.

The Design of them is now notoriously transposed; Virtue's exposed, Vice applauded in a most shameful manner; corrupt Nature, and the vicious genius of the Age, need no Provocatives. I speak not to such as have no sense of Danger; some sharp Affliction, or the Flames of Hell, must convince them: But to such as seem to have some concern for their Souls, but would fain compramise matters; enjoy their Humours and hope for Heaven still in Reversion. I beg of such to bethink themselves betimes, to Judge impartially, and Act resolutely; to tare themselves off with a holy Violence from this combination with Hell, which indeed is the very Mouth of it.

Here

Here many learn to lisp Oaths, till they grow consummate in other fiendship Language; here tinging their Fancies with the Oratory of Prophane Wit, they commence Masters of the black Art; to Burlesque the Sacred Oracles, Droll on Sacred things, and Ridicule all Religion: Here Marriage, an Ordinance of God, some have seen so long made a May-game of, and the airy frisks of the Man of the Town, set off with such Gallantry; till they look'd upon Virtue, but as an Emblem of Slavery; a Chain for Mad-Men to draw after them; or a Rattle for Fools to Play with; till at length they precipitated themselves into the Gulph of Libertinism. These are some light Sketches of the monstrous Issues of this teeming Womb of Iniquity.

The natural tendency of these things to Vanity and Wickedness, one would think, should awaken a sober Mind. Let such recollect themselves, and try if, upon serious Thoughts, they can reconcile the Profession of so holy a Religion, as the Scriptures advance, to the Patronizing of so Impious a Cause; as they certainly do while they afford it their Presence and Support; encouraging the Locusts and Caterpillers, that devour every green thing in the Garden of Virtue and Piety. 'Twill excuse none to say, they have no such Design: Actions have a Voice as well as Words; and were our Intentions good, not supposeable where this Practice is customary; yet they alter not the Pro-

perties of Good and Evil. The Nature of things are really what they are, be our Thoughts what they will about them; only we are more or less guilty, according to the Degrees of Light and Conviction we have, or might have, had we ply'd the means. But 'tis in vain to talk of good Intentions, while it is notoriously known, that Blasphemy, Prophanity, and Irreligion, are the harmony of the Diversion: And such as know this, can't be excus'd from giving their implicit Consent; and the consequence of that looks too terrible, to be slightly pass'd over. We hear our Friends Reproached and Scorn'd, with great regret; and are ready to Vindicate them, or leave the Company; And can we see the Wounds of our best Friend tore open before our Faces, all that's dear to him Villifi'd and Disgrac'd, and all that relates to him brought into the utmost Contempt, and be easy and diverted all this while? Absurd unnatural Pretences.

The best Plays, as they call them, are acted late on a *Saturday* Night; a goodly Preparative, no doubt, for the holy Exercises of the Day following: When Scenes of Vanity and Wickedness, strongly impressed over Night, are reviv'd with waking Thoughts, and it may be carried in Triumph to the House of God, to affront Him to his Face, unless sloth make them otherwise dispose of the Morning. And no wonder if such spend the latter part of the Day in Visits and Diversions;

versions; to Chat and Gaze away all important Truths, that should make them Wiser or Better. I Bless God, he ever so aw'd my Spirit in my worst Rambles, that I ne'er broke this Hedge, in frequenting Plays at such a Season; nor Prophaning his holy Day by idle Visits, or carnal Divertisements. Too many there be, that tho' they forbear Plays, yet make bold to chat away the after part of this Blessed Day without regret. Let such as have pleaded for this, and so forwarded the practice, reflect; what Service they have done Religion by putting in their Plea, or which is as bad, their Example, in defending or abetting such hurtful Liberties.

Some have been so bold as to say, there might be as much learnt by a Play as a Sermon, who would be very angry, if any presume to call their Religion in question: but I'm sure that, or their Discretion, if not both, are justly censurable; who dare make an Ordinance of God, truckle to the Devil's Seminary. He is like to make a hopeful Moralist, and such as go to his Pupils to School, no doubt, are like to be well taught: Our Gains here can ne'er bear our Charges; the accomplishments of Art or Nature, will ne'er recompence the loss of what's infinitely better, Virtue and a good Conscience. The pretences of Example of some reputed good, that frequent these Diversions, is a Snare of our own devising, in which I caught my self, and then

found it so; the Devil and my own false Heart cast a Mist before my Eyes, so very speciously led me into it, which I found very strong and bewitching. How do we know such to be good? Nothing's more deceitful many times, than a Profession or a Character: I'm sure there's reason for suspicion. Do I know what

u. Principles act such a one? What his Sentiments, Knowledge, and Convictions are?

*motive.s
of actions
in mankind
unknown.*

What his Aims and Ends? As these differ much, so may my Case from his; God for these Reasons, or others best known to himself, may snatch him as a Brand out of the Fire, while he may leave me justly to perish in the Flames.

We must walk by Rule, and Examples suitable; but ne'er forsake that, to follow one of Reputation, who recedes from
Rom. 4. 23. it. We are told by an Apostle, one may Eat that safely, which another Eating doubtfully, is damn'd if he Eats; because *What is not of Faith, is Sin.* If meer Example won't justify in matters indifferent, how much less does it, in what's Dubious or Unlawful? It's a sad Sight, to see bad Men strengthen each others Hands in Wickedness; but a much worse, to see good Men Emboldening one another in the Broad-way. Were such as are call'd good, really so, they wou'd better consider the danger of hazarding themselves, and misleading a weak Brother, and confirming the Prophane in their Wickedness; by giving their Ways the
Reputa-

Reputation of their Presence and Assent; were this duly thought on, one refuge of Lies would be dismantled, and one the less Corner left for Hypocrites to nestle their Heads in to nap away the Checks of Conscience.

My own Folly has put me upon saying a little on this Subject, out of a sincere Design to reclaim others. A few Arguments will persuade the Sincere, when many will not the Obstinate; but the Day is coming that will. In the mean while let all that have any true sense of Religion, bethink themselves, learn Wisdom at others cost, and take that upon trust that else must cost them dear. It's remarkably to be observed, that these wicked Entertainments fill'd up the measure of my Sins, and ripen'd me for Divine Vengeance; which I'll describe after a few general Remarks made on what's pass'd. Observe then,

1. That nothing is more deceitful than is naturally the Heart of Man, and Sin; the one to insinuate insensibly under plausible pretexts, and the other to receive the Poison under fair semblances; and so betray us to infinite hazards.

2. This falseness of the Heart demonstrates the depravity of our Nature; that we are far from being the Creatures God at first made us: that it should exceedingly humble us to think, that in our natural State, we are haters of God, and Holiness: The thoughts of our Hearts are Gen. 51 6. *only Evil, and that continually*: The Hebrew

word not only signifies the Imagination, but also the purposes and desires of the Heart. The Fruit evidently declares the Root: Were we not sunk low by the Fall, we could ne'er be such Enemies to God, and our best Interest. Great is the force of Habits; but we find good ones are soon lost, Evil ones with the greatest difficulty; which plainly indicates our natural Propensities. Pride is our undoing, Humility our Restoration. Let us make then a kindly use of this Consideration, and trace up all the Eruptions of Sin, in our Hearts and Lives, to the impure Fountain of corrupt Nature, which will make Sin appear exceeding sinful, and consequently help more effectually to Humble us, which we most of all stand in need of.

3. That Convictions stifled, Advice despis'd, Warnings neglected, Vows and Promises broken, Providences and Calls of Mercy and Afflictions overlook'd or resisted; as they are bright Indications of the plight we are in naturally, so they excite God's Wrath, provoking him in the highest manner, and make way for the severest Judgments on this side Hell, or utter perdition.

4. That our strongest Resolutions, are no match of themselves against our natural propensities to Evil, especially when reinforced by Custom, and back'd by Temptations from the World, and the cunning Serpent. The Viper in our own Bosoms is enough to destroy us, if left to our

our selves ; how much more fatally, when reinforced with these Auxillaries ?

5. That he who calls not in God's Grace to his Assistance, by Serious Prayer, and Dependance ; and watches not faithfully against the Occasions of Sin and Temptation, will certainly be drawn in, and overcome ; and the sooner, the greater his Presumption. He'll fail of executing his good Purposes for want of a Principle, the spring of the Performance : and if that, where it is, will protect none while secure, we may easily foresee what will become of his good Resolutions, that puts fearlessly to Sea without Helm, Sails, or defensive Weapons : That has no Principle to guide him ; that can neither Fight nor Fly.

6. That we are naturally prone to trust in our own Strength, and from that Conceit, to swell into Self-Confidence ; or take up with a meer empty Notion of God's Grace, if we don't deny it ; rather as a compliment to God, or the Sentiments of our Teachers ; not from a deep sense of its real worth, and our own pressing necessities. And this procedure is a discovery of our natural Blindness and Perverseness, who after many disappointments, still adhere to the Idol of Self-sufficiency.

7. How easy is it to mistake Education, exterior Performances. rounds of Duties, for the real vital acts of Religion ? Thousands are ruin'd this way ; it requires then our utmost care to avoid this Snare,

Snare, to which we are so naturally prone : We are too ready to lean our hopes on any Prop, tho' near so deceitful, if it will but take off the weight of our present Fears, that may hinder our Enjoyments : Great things at a distance, little move us ; realiz'd only by Faith, a carnal Mind has little of, and cares less to exercise : no wonder then he contentedly takes up with a slender Security, about matters he little values.

8. That without purity of Heart, all the demureness of Devotion, and Conversation, is but the shining Varnish of refined Hypocrisie, tending to Apostacy : Our chief care then must be of our Hearts, which naturally we are most in-cautious of.

9. That one Lust allow'd, will hinder a saving closure with *Jesus Christ*, and preclude our Interest in his Blood and Merits. If any thing hinder the Cion from a Vital Union with the Stock, it receives neither Life nor Growth ; for true Union is the Life of Communication, to derive Sap and Spirit to animate and fructify. *Christ* compares himself to the Vine, and Believers to Branches, vitally inserted into him, which makes them living, *John* 15. for want of which real Union, nominal Christians, are there stiled withering Branches, like dry Wood, proper fuel for the Fire.

Many other representations there are in Scripture, which express the necessity of a vital, real, tho' mysterious Union
between

between Christ and the Soul of a true Believer. See this fully prov'd in a small piece of that admirable Prelate Bishop Hall, called the *Mystick Union*, highly worthy of every serious Christian's perusal. But now, one Lust loved and allow'd, obstructs this Conjunction; for as St. James says, He that *breaks the Law in one point, is guilty of all*; which the prevalency of his darling Lust, would cause him actually to violate, stood it in his way.

What a sad State is this, to lose all the Services we perform, and Pains we take in Religion; yet this is the Case if our Persons are not accepted, which they are not, till united to Christ our Head, by true Faith and Love, whereby we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; who is *in us the hope of Glory*; dwelling in our Hearts by Faith. 'Tis an Expression of an Excellent Person, Arch-Bishop Layton's Preface to *Serm. 4. pag. 56.* " External Worship, " openly acknowledges a Deity; but want " of inward sense in Worship, secretly " denies it: To present the Living God " with a Carcass of lifeless Worship, is " to pay him with shells of Services, and " so to mock him: And it is a more " admirable long-suffering in him to defer the Punishment of such Devotion, " than all the other Sins in the World. This is the deplorable State of all Formalists, who not being Converted, and United to Christ by saving Faith, have

not

not his Spirit, without whose Assistance, nothing is transacted acceptably in Devotion.

O the vast difference between a holy, and an unsanctified Heart! What awful Conceptions has one of the Perfections of the Deity? What a sense of the Excellency of Spiritual Worship, and the Injury and Affront offered a holy God, when any thing beneath it is tender'd him? while the Hypocrite thinks him such a one as himself, daring to put him off with a dead Sacrifice, fit only for an Idol; nay, which is worse, if that can be, confides in this, as the matter of his acceptance. Would such mistaken People seriously Read the Scriptures, and spiritual Books, they might, by God's Grace ne'er wanting to honest Endeavours, detect this deceit of their Hearts in time.

*Faith in
Exercise
how glo-
rious?*

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10. What a glorious grace is Faith in Exercise? By this we see him that is Invisible, his Providences in the World, and various dealings with our own Souls; this sets us above the World and base Selfishness: By this, all the Christian Heroes perform'd their mighty exploits mention'd *Heb.* 11. What a mean abject thing, is a Soul acted by Sense? How does it grovel in the Dust? How dark and dead to God; and all that's Good or Great? to all his Dispensations. When he calls him to Repentance by Providences, Judgments, Afflictions, Terrors of Conscience he neither sees, nor hears, but foolishly attempts to run from him, by thrust-

thrusting his Head into Business or Diversions; which all prove as Oil to the Flame to set the House on Fire: God redoubles his Chastisements, to lash him home; or abandons him for ever. How unmanly and ridiculous is it to attempt to muzzle Conscience, a spiritual Principle, by the short flickers of Fancy, Jest, Quaffs, Intoxications of Wine or Company? These Opiates can but truce the Pain, ne'er Cure the Distemper, but encrease it; and that remission is dearly bought, that redoubles the Paroxysm.

11. Sins of Omission affect us not so much as those of Commission, tho' as inseparable as the Shadow and the Body. The Spirit of a Man is always active; if not well Employ'd, it will be in Mischief. The danger I was in my self, makes me inculcate it with the greater Emphasis.

12. That the formal Use or neglect of God's Ordinances, are reputed a horrid abuse and contempt of him, and render us obnoxious to his severest Judgments.

13. That naturally one Sin disposes to another, as it darkens the Mind, hardens the Heart, ingrosses the Affections; and judicially, as God punishes Sin with Sin, by withdrawing his Grace, letting loose Satan; so justly punishing the wicked freedoms we take, with Vassalage to that Tyrant; a drudgery infinitely worse than that of *Aegyptian* Slavery: and he would think it so, that was obliged to act any Lust continually.

These

These are some Conclusions I would make for the Use of my self and others. 'Tis hard to convince an habitual Sinner, but harder still to drive a Formalist, or a meer civil Man out of his false dependancies; as well may you perswade a drowning Man from catching at Weeds and Bull-rushes, that help him not, but entangle him, as attempt to unhinge such a Man's carnal confidence. If any such cast an Eye on these Lines, little to be expected; but if Curiosity lead them to some cursory glances to satisfy that, or their criticizing Humor; I desire 'em to turn to an Expression of a judicious Divine. 'Tis this,

Bolton's General Divine, p. 337.

speaking of the Torments of Hell; " One Hour therein, is infinitely more stinging and terrible, than all the Tortures that all Mankind hath, doth, or shall endure, from the Creation to the End of the World: Then adds concerning the Joys of Heaven; " That one Hour there, doth incomparably surpass all the Delights of this wide World, were they collected into one lump of Pleasure. It appears by his Life and Death, that he was no stranger to a more than ordinary taste of both, and such are the best Judges in the Case; and such as read his Life, will, I believe, be of the same Opinion, and I'm sure not lose their Labour.

How difficult it is to impress a natural Man, free from gross Sins, with a sense of his miserable State and only Remedy, I leave all to judge, that have experienced

perienced the power of Religion; who have observ'd the great change in themselves, and attempt it in others. And for Hypocrites and Formalists, our Blessed Lord tells us, Publicans and Harlots go to Heaven before Scribes and Pharisees: Conscience is awaken'd with the guilt of notorious Crimes, while it drops asleep upon the Pillow of Formality. Precept and Example are most cogent, but will not do without a higher Principle: The more need we have ardently to ask God's holy Spirit, who has promised it to such as do, if our cold desires don't bespeak a denial. That passage of our Saviour, *John 4. 10.* seems to favour an answer even to natural desires: *If thou knewest the Gift of God, &c.* says our Lord to the Woman of Samaria; *thou wouldst have ask'd of him, and he would have given thee Living Water.* It will be found another Day, Men perish for want of asking: Not for want of Means, but Will; which leaves them inexcusable.

Blessed God, what a Wretch have I been! I beseech thee humbly, for Sweet Jesus sake, to cover every tittle of the black Account I have to make to Thee, with his most precious Blood; and grant I may entirely be found in him, not having my own Righteousness, which is but as filthy Rags; but the Righteousness which is by Faith in him, in the Hour of Death, and terrible Day of Judgment.
Amen.

I venture to digress thus; if possible to rouse the Stupid. Thus far have I endeavour'd to traverse the various Windings of the Subtle old Serpent, with those of my own Heart; thro' the different Stages of my Life, toss'd with so many Storms of Temptations, that often threaten'd to over-set me, and must, had not a kind hand of Providence continually trim'd the Vessel: Few were my Halcyon Days, and those commonly prov'd the harbingers of blustering Seasons: But alas! all this while, I little thought from what quarter the Wind blew. I over-look'd Sin, the Wrath of a holy God, and Satan the Executioner; I resolv'd all into Mechanism, the disorders of the Blood and Spirits; Philosophising on the Subject, as usually do the Sons of Art. It must be supposed these Visitations took up a Series of many Years, and that I studiously omit many things of lesser note: Very many kind Deliverances, &c. with unjust returns of neglect I pass by; choosing only to mention them in the gross, to my own Shame and God's Glory.

“ **E**Nter not, O Lord, into Judgment
 “ with thy Servant, for past Errors:
 “ Spare such as confess their Faults, re-
 “ store the Penitent. Cleanse the Thoughts
 “ and Affections of my Heart by the In-
 “ spiration of thy Holy Spirit, that I
 “ may abhor every thing displeasing to
 “ thee, and ever seek thy Honor and
 “ Glory;

“ Glory. Rouze up my Soul to Diligence
 “ and Activity, who have so long loiter-
 “ ed, and most grievously provok’d Thee :
 “ Help me to redeem precious Time,
 “ worth all that can be thought to the
 “ dying, and such as are pass’d hope.
 “ Lord make me seriously consider the
 “ Golden Sands trickle down apace ; that
 “ when my Glas is turn’d, it’s for all
 “ Eternity: Grant I may think of that
 “ Word, till my Soul fly to the Bosom
 “ of Christ by Faith, that in his Strength,
 “ the rest of my Life hereafter may be
 “ pure and holy ; so that at the last I
 “ may come to thy Eternal Joy, thro’
 “ *Jesus Christ* ; to whom with Thee,
 “ and the Blessed Spirit, be everlasting
 “ Praises, one God, World without End.
 “ *Amen.*

P A R T II.

*Consisting of more material Passages
relating to some strong Tem-
ptations.*

THE surest try'd piece of Armor,
is the Shield of Faith, *that*
quenches all the fiery darts of the
Devil; and the Sword of God's holy Spi-
rit, the Word of God, is the only sure
Weapon to repel him; but how shall I
persuade the Faithless and Unbelieving?
Could I by Words communicate a feel-
ing sense of the Terror of the Battle,
I'm confident, I could strike them with
Fear and Trembling; but that's quite out
of my Sphere, and must come from a
higher Hand: However I'll shew them
my Scars, that they may conceive the bet-
ter of the heat of the Action.

Such as have a sense of their Dan-
ger, but too feeble, to put them upon
their Guard; I wou'd excite to Caution,
while they read of the bitter Fruits of
my Carelessness; that afforded my mali-
cious Enemy such an opportunity for Tri-
umph. Let such know, tho' winking
for a while may hide their danger, and
keep

keep off the troublesome sense of it; 'twill at length bring them with full Sail into the Mouth of it, to their infinite Terror. While we resist the Devil, he flies; but every Moment we drop our Watch, he gains Ground of us; and if he have these Advantages long, he's in a fair way to put it out of our power. Be wise betimes, for Woe's the Portion of the negligent.

This black and amazing Scene of my Life, is the true occasion, I give my self and the World this trouble; to which all pass'd is subservient. I can't suppose a relation of this Nature, tho' I dip'd my Pen in my Heart, cou'd give a just sense of the matter. I know such horrors can only be felt, ne'er to the Life be express'd; no more than a Painter can express Life, Motion, and Sensation, by his Colours: But if one may trust another's Word, and Experience, it falls as short of the reality of the thing, as painted Flames do of real. What I aim at then is, to give the process of the Temptation; to describe as I can, what might be Natural, and what Diabolical; what advantages I gave the Enemy, and how he improv'd them; how God all along supported, and at length deliver'd me. To warn the Bold; Instruct and Comfort the Tempted; and by all, that God may be glorified; to whom be all Praise for ever.

To avoid all Breaks in this Narrative, I'll relate pure matter of Fact; then make some descants on Particulars; so leave the

u
Horrors
 not to be
 describ'd.

u.

Reader to form his own at pleasure. To which end, I desire him to read it with seriousness; and suspend his Censure till he has judiciously weigh'd the whole. While the Wrath of God is the Subject, let none presume to Play with his Thunder-Bolts; nor think themselves out of their reach: Tho' their Mountain seem to stand strong, it may fall, after many a shock, as mine did. Let others reflect upon themselves, while I'm confessing my unworthy Behaviour to my great Benefactor; unwearied in his Patience to me, a most provoking Rebel, insensible of his Terrors, and the Riches of his Mercy; sinning too much as Grace abounded; deaf to all his Calls, but the last and loudest, able to awake the dead in Trespases and Sins.

Had he frown'd me into Hell, he had been Just, nay, Merciful in sparing me so long; which I here acknowledge in the Face of Angels and Men, to the Honor of his Free-Grace, and my own confusion. From the very bottom of my Soul, would I thank him for his Discipline, especially for his Aids and Supports, and those sanctified improvements he help'd me to make of them, the thoughts of which, reconcile me to them, as a Child's Portion, therefore to be had at any rate, cost what they will, tho' others have them on cheaper terms. So far am I from regret, that I solemnly profess; I would not have been exempted from the Lot, for the whole World, tho' the Trial was long and sharp.

sharp. O the boundless Love and Power of God ! that can make Light spring out of the very shadow of Death, and Heaven out of Hell ! all glory to *Jehovah* most high, for ever. *Amen.*

To premise the immediate Occasion of the ensuing Troubles, which was nothing but what's usual ; *viz.* some worldly concern, which producing Anxiety, agitates the Blood and Spirits, till great disorders ensue, which at length tumbles into troubles of quite another nature. 'Tis needless to express what thus affected me, otherwise than in general ; but it's very observable, that a Righteous God made that my Torment, which I doted on, and had abus'd to sinful Pleasure : Something of that kind had drawn me from God, into Sin and Danger too too often ; no wonder then Divine Justice made that the beginning of my Punishment. While Temptation prevail'd, and the Waters overflowed my Soul, the Stream was too thin and rapid to make discoveries ; but when the Flood fell, and all settled, I saw clearly my Error, and what lay at the bottom of it. I found my Heart vain and Sensual, set on the fulness and delights of the World ; growing on that cursed Root of bitterness, Covetousness, which sprung up without my observance. A Vice so stupifying, that the most guilty, scarce mistrust themselves ; It's sharply censur'd by all, but few escape it : We can hate it in others, beholding it pregnant with the Abominations of Rapine,

F 3

Oppres.

Oppression, mistrust of Providence, and gross Idolatry, with a large, &c. can liberally in a third Person pass bitter invectives against it, but with great difficulty see it in our selves; but guild it over with wise and provident Appellations.

44 I'll endeavour to word every Passage, as expressive of what I felt, as may be; tho' I fear, the most of it will appear to some, but as the Illusions of Fancy; to others, the meer force of Distemper; and to all, more or less, a Riddle, that have not had some experimental feelings of this kind themselves. The Men of Sense, as they affect to be call'd, are ready to solve all into the power of Imagination, resulting from the disorders of the Blood and Spirits, with whom all is Enthusiasm, that can't be solv'd by Matter and Motion. Too much Learning, or the conceit of it, makes them run a madding this way.

After some anxious Thoughts about Temporal matters, the concerns of my Soul came more in View. I found an irresistible torrent of extravagant Fears bearing me down; fearing all fearables, the extremity of Difficulties and Dangers. I endeavour'd to argue my self into better Temper, but found all resistance was as vain, as throwing my self into the Sea, to stem the Tide. The Current of my Thoughts I felt invincible; if I oppos'd it, the Waters swell'd higher till they broke in upon me, with double force: and while I ran with the Stream,
I mul-

I multiplied endlessly black Thoughts. Such pressing Difficulties indicate the power of Temptation, which soon appear'd. I fell now into deep thoughts about the State of my Soul, and found all naught, and which was worse, saw no hope of Recovery: that which fasten'd most on my Spirit, was, that I had received the Sacrament unworthily; so had eaten and drunk my own Damnation: Much was said to me, as well as what I read in Arch-Bishop *Tillotson*, on that Subject, but with little effect: They abated something of the desperateness of the conclusion I form'd against my self, but still Horrors haunted me, Sleep went from me, and nothing but Death and Damnation star'd me in the Face.

Some Days passing at this rate, I began to fall into great Agonies, which a Friend observing, advis'd me to consult a part of the Works of Dr. Preston. I scarce read a Page, but I met with a lively description of some Vices, with very severe and unwary expressions about Repentance; which fill'd me with despondency. Now I concluded my State Remediless; that God in his Providence pointed me to read my own Sentence, and now had finally Seal'd my doom. Justly did God make me see his Hand with amazement, who would not see it in milder Dispensations, which reveal'd his displeasure.

Now was I lock'd up in dismal Despair; my Sins glar'd me in the Face like so many Devils; I was Day and Night up-

on the Rack. When I was about to fill my Belly, God threw in the fury of his Wrath; when I thought my Bed should ease my complaint, he scar'd me with Dreams, and Terrors of the Night; his dread fell upon me and pierc'd my Soul. I was full of tossings too and fro, wishing when it was Morning that it was Evening, and the Evening, that it was Morning. I was a terror to my self and all about me. I was a Fear to my Friends and Acquaintance; and seem'd a Butt for the Arrows of the Almighty; the Poison of which drank up my Spirit. While I suffer'd his Terrors I was distracted; I loathed Life, and would have dug for the Grave, as a hid Treasure; but still as Life was a Burthen, the thoughts of Hell after Death were intolerable: Most gladly would I have hid my Head among the Clods, would the Dust but give me rest; but full well I knew, Death would transmit my Soul to what was infinitely worse than I felt, or could imagine. In this anguish of Heart, and bitterness of Soul, I restrain'd Prayer before God, reputing him my irreconcilable Enemy.

In this mournful Condition, I endeavour'd to appease the fury of my thoughts, with such kind of Devices as these. If I must to Hell at last; why should I precipitate Life by gnawing Fears, that fret away its thread so fast? Why should I not make as much of it as I can? Life, as wretched as it seems, may by some relaxation,

laxation, become tolerable; some Balm may be found to cure the Wound; or some expedient contriv'd to turn the Stream of these hideous Thoughts; that some had been in as deep a Pit, who yet had been recover'd: However that my present Circumstances were good, compared with the State of Hell, the Completion of all Misery. But alas! all this was but carrying a Lie in my right Hand; the Edge of my keen Thoughts was turn'd a while, but the Fancy over, 'twas as sharp as ever: neither Physick nor Friends could cure or comfort, nor so much as alleviate: The Means I used by an overruling Hand, contributed to my Distress; some unforeseen Symptoms arising from their Administration, which prov'd a Handle to fancy to take hold of, to augment my Misery: This terminated in absolute despair for Soul and Body, apprehending Death approaching. And now ev'ry cranny of Hope, even the last I had, was shut up; supposing Repentance, if possible, that it must needs come too late: This made me think my Self in the Suburbs of Hell; and how dismal my State then was, I think may be imagin'd as far as thoughts can reach, without real Experience. How vain is it to attempt to wrestle out of his Hand? When he shuts, none can open.

I found that sadly true, a faithful Friend had predicted; viz. if I forgot God, the Time would come I should tare my Hair for vexation. I reflected on this, with
 strange

strange remorse, when I had literally fill'd it in the extremity of my Anguish; not sparing my own Flesh in a Paroxysm of Indignation, at my extream Folly. I threw my self into various Postures, as one desperate, and at a loss, how to express the over-whelming horrors of his Mind. In some of these painful Postures, I reflected on the Torments of Hell, and comparing my present uneasiness with those exquisite Tortures of Soul and Body; I stretch'd fancy to receive the more terrible Forms of Misery; then adding to all that Hell of Hells, Eternity; I more lively compleated the Idea of that ever-burning Tophet.

One Day as I was passionately bewailing my self, a Friend offer'd me a Book, adding good Advice, but alas! I was pass'd all. When read to, I wrested all against my Self; and when any put a Weapon into my Hand, I turn'd it against my own Bowels; especially when terrible expressions happen'd, or I dip'd upon them, as I did often to my unspeakable Terror: For when I met with these, I was persuaded God pointed to my Fate, so concluded my self under unavoidable Wrath. This is a usual, but dangerous Practice with many on the like occasion; avoid it therefore as a Snare and a Temptation: Sometimes Success has follow'd, but much oftner has it proved pernicious; *Clark's Lives* affords an Instance of one that frequently dip'd thus in the Bible, and several times met with words of Comfort,

as the Party repeated it ; but should any on this Presumption attempt the like, and miss the Mark, or hit upon the contrary, the Inference made will be desperate. Mrs. *Honywood*, after God had wrought a Miracle, to convince her of her unjust despondency, was much concern'd she had Tempted God by such extraordinary Methods: The way of Duty is the way of Safety: Rash Appeals and bold unprescrib'd Adventures, are bold hazards, that generally succeed accordingly.

I ask'd Counsel of Spiritual Guides, before matters came to this extremity, but discover'd not the bottom of the Sore, for want of Humility to confess my Vileness ; to give God Glory, by taking shame to my self: For this I quickly smarted, my Wound was ne'er search'd, but skinn'd over with soft Words, which festering ; God open'd it with a very painful Cautick. One Day as I was pensively walking about my Room, I felt suddenly darted into my Soul, some more immediate Rays of Divine Wrath, as I thought, with inexpressible horror ; expecting every Minute to be frown'd to Hell. I could not bear up under it, my natural Strength and Spirits quite sinking under its weight: The extremity of it, lasted not many Minutes, otherwise it had absolutely crush'd me, being utterly unsupportable. * This drove me, and all about me, to the utmost Confusion, when they saw me quite over-born with intolerable pangs of Horror. I ne'er felt any thing like this before

* Scripture
says some-
where, "lest
the spirits
shd. fail
before me."

fore or since, but once, as I shall after relate, and pray God I ne'er may. It seem'd directly to affect me, without the assistance of my own Reflections; for then I made few or none, but was wholly taken up with the astonishing terror of the immediate Impression; and all my previous thoughts were but ordinary as to kind or degree. I had many times been harder press'd by these before, nothing of this nature following.

This left me hopeless, I supposing God bore his Testimony from Heaven more immediately against me, that therefore my Doom was irreversibile: I spent the Remains of this Day in dreadful expectations of final Execution, and that speedily: Satan charg'd me with one fiery Dart after another incessantly; sometimes filling my Fancy with dreadful foreboding; shaking at other times my Heart with Terror, that brought me into utmost confusion. I mistook these injections for the Notices of God's Will, communicated in displeasure, tho' I expected the Evil Spirit to be the Executioner: The Night I pass'd much at the same rate, in a frightful restless manner.

These direful Impressions stuck close to me, at least the sense of what had pass'd; which I construed as sure Indications of my utter ruine, which every Moment might be compleated. Many Days and Nights thus spent, it pleas'd God to bless the Use of Opiates in great Mercy; for otherwise I believe I could not have held out

out longer, but dy'd I must or fell distracted. During this distress, the Divine I lately mentioned, visited me. I dar'd not, as formerly, to vindicate my Sincerity, tho' I really then answer'd him according to the Opinion I conceiv'd of my Self; reputing nothing but gross Hypocrisie inconsistent with it; as Thousands I fear do, to their utter undoing; but now my proud Plumes fell; I saw more of the rottenness of my Heart. I was for holding fast my Integrity, tho' nothing but meer Presumption, as do many Hypocrites, that little think themselves under that denomination; blindly plodding on in formality, under the Power of some unmortifi'd Lust. I made not a full Confession to him, as I had to others, tho' I had suffered so extreamly. O the hardness of my base Heart, that requir'd so many tough wedges to rive it!

Whenever I open'd my Mind to any I could be free with; I found some sensible ease, especially upon confessing and aggravating my Crimes: which I desire all to observe, as well as how I fail'd in my Consults, either under-doing, or over-doing. I either neglected, or depended too much on their Assistances: Strange extreams, very distant, yet both I was guilty of to a high degree interchangeably; and all for want of looking up to God as I should. My Circumstances had a dreadful Aspect, and had not God upheld me secretly with one Hand, while he press'd me as it were to the Grave and Hell with the

the other; infallibly the Pit had quite swallow'd me up, and shut her Mouth upon me. But Blessed be his holy Name, while he thus seem'd to frown me to the bottomless Pit, his everlasting Arms were still under me. O the adorable Patience of a holy God, towards a froward, obstinate, wicked Worm!

Tho. à Kempis.

As it pleas'd God to abate somewhat the fierceness of these Reflexions, at times I fell to reading; and took a peculiar affection to a very devout, spiritual Book. Tho' I saw how far I was from Attainments in the Spiritual Life there describ'd; yet I read it with singular Pleasure, and earnest desires of Conformity to the Rules projected: tho' it dejected me, yet it kindly humbled me, making me loath the Follies of my pass'd Life.

When my Fears ran high, the greatest diversion I found, was in vain Wishes that I had liv'd better; that I had taken Warning; that I had not been what I was, but rather in any Body's circumstances than my own, tho' the meanest; or that I had never been; at least a Creature capable of such a Misery, as I fear'd I was now consign'd to. Tho' these Thoughts kept off more terrible ones, yet they carry'd a peculiar Sting with them, and kept out more profitable ones: By fits when I felt any Truce, I snatch'd at it, to improve it in earnest Prayer, more than at my appointed Food. When importun'd to attend the publick Service of God, horror took hold of me; I dreaded the thoughts

thoughts of it ; but when I felt a relaxation of the impetuosity of the Temptation, I comply'd.

Accordingly one Day I heard a Sermon on the glory of the Resurrection, expressing very emphatically the radiancy of all the Parts of a glorify'd Body. Impossible is it to conceive the cutting regret that peirc'd my very Soul thro' and thro', when I concluded I had for ever lost my Share in it: The Anguish of this Thought gnaw'd my Heart all the remains of that Evening, with more pungency than the Fear of Hell had before. Now and then this Fire burst forth in most dreadful Expressions, in Words and Gesture, to the Terror of all about me. I now repented of the time I had spent well, for concluding myself a Hypocrite, and a Cast-away ; I apprehended God was the more incens'd and severe with me on that account ; and the fate of such pronounced in the holy Gospel, increas'd my Distress.

Let such consider this, who little value Heaven more than a meer Refuge from Hell: When they fully know what they have lost, 'twill prove no small part of the Torment they fear. And let such as trifle with God in the Solemnities of his Worship, and put him off with the Husk of dry formal Performances ; let such, I say, know, they trust to a broken Reed, that not only will fail them in their greatest need, but pierce them thro' with infinite Sorrow.

While

While my Mind por'd only on one thing, it drove me to strange Extremities, and passionate Expressions ; but it pleased God, my Thoughts now shifted, which abated the keenness of them, so gave me an opportunity of changing Air. But alas ! this was but a short Truce ; Horrors reviv'd, and every thing, I thought, preach'd terror to me. One Day reading the Inscription on a Tomb that concluded with the Hopes of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ : That Thought struck me with inexpressible twinges of Horror ; apprehending him as a terrible Judge, whose Favour I had for ever forfeited. I attended the Prayers of the Church, but with utmost Confusion, repenting my neglect, or trifling in Devotion ; conceiving I could gladly spend the remains of my Days on my Knees, would but God accept my Services and shine upon me. Could I communicate the Sensations I now was under, as I do the relation of them, I'm sure they would convince the Hard Hearted'st Sinner breathing.

O how vastly different are Mens apprehensions about these matters, while wrap'd up in Security, or under the power of these Impressions ! how backward to Duty, and cold in it ? At what a Distance does the great Day and Judge appear in one Case as tho' he would ne'er come ? In the other, how is every Minute grudg'd, not employ'd in the one thing necessary ? How like nothing does every thing else appear ? What a nothing appears Time to Eternity ?

How

How near does the Judge appear? even at the Door. God help us to improve these Vicissitudes to a steady, constant performance of our great Duty to the End. *Pr.*

Here I spent the weary Nights in telling the tedious Hours; and yet the Morning to me was but as the Shadow of Death: the Days I pass'd in wishings for lost Seasons, and present possibilities; and this employ, tho' sad enough, seem'd easy to the fiery Reflexions of some Paroxysms, I every now and then fell into. Every holy useful Man I envy'd, as the only happy Man: Great Things and Men I despis'd or pity'd: Such as seduc'd me, I malign'd and loath'd: My Mind was full of odious Reflections on God's Conduct, which I most impudently censur'd, as designing my Ruine; ne'er considering his admirable Patience and Lenity towards me. My present smart eat out the sense of all his pass'd Favours, and the wicked Apprehensions I had, that he intended ever to set me up as the Butt of his displeasure, fill'd my Soul with rancor: That he only lifted me up with Advantages, to make my Fall the more deplorable. By these Suggestions Satan sour'd my Spirit, and fretted it with envenom'd Resentments, which often issu'd forth in dolorous Complaints. This occasion'd me to reluct at the disposals of Divine Providence, and at length to grow desperate, as it were in Opposition to it. Thus, I own, work'd my vile Heart, (which now

Pr.

was a little Emblem of Hell;) to the glory of God's rich forbearance let it be recorded, and my own shame. Lord lay not this Sin to my charge another day, for the holy Jesus sake. *Amen.*

W.

While I glanced over any encouraging Passages in good Books; or discoursed them over, I was a little eased; but immediately my Thoughts return'd to the old Current, when these little helps were over; and sometimes with more violence, as a Stream rushes after conquering some Obstructions in its Course. I felt strong desires of doing good, and being useful to others, in the midst of all these terrible Storms that continually roll'd over my Head; tho' the terror of them hinder'd my applying my self to any Methods. This is the usual way of the cruel Adversary of our Souls, he first wheedles us into the loss of our Golden Seasons, and only shews us their Excellency, when the sense of their worth can't Profit, but Torment.

W.

After a few Weeks thus dolefully spent, I return'd back with much the same Temper of Mind: Change of Places, and variety of means, had little effect. I found no Plaster broad enough for my Sore; no refuge for a Soul pursued with Storms of Divine Wrath, that follow'd me like Lightening: But still matters came not to that extremity my Sins deserv'd, and my stubborn Heart requir'd effectually to humble it. I scarce ever look'd on Fire, but Hell flash'd in my Face; and Eternity

nity added to the apprehension, made the Thoughts intolerable. Time was a Burthen from these horrors; and yet I saw the worth of it more clearly than ever; and when I saw any well Employ'd I envy'd their happiness, and regretted with the greatest Anguish, my own miserable Fate.

I still made but half Confessions, in disguising expressions; for which reason I doubt not, God kept me longer on the Rack, to make me accept of Mercy on any Terms.

One Day I was perswaded to divert my self abroad after much intreaty, but every thing I look'd on struck Terror. It was a bright Day, but I being a Son of Darkness, even the Light that chear'd others, struck horror into me. I spent the time in vain and eager Wishes after the State of this and that good Man; so that what turn'd the Stream of more piercing Thoughts still tormented me. As I return'd home, I felt strange Impressions of God's Wrath darted into my Soul, that I thought pursued me like flashes of Lightning. They seem'd to be direct Rays struck immediately on my naked Spirit with unconceivable Torture, that quite over-whelm'd and amaz'd me. They were short, or they had been intolerable; no more to be born, than the Eye can bear the glaring Light of the Body of the Sun. I mention'd something of this nature once before: These were the only times I felt such peculiar Coruscations of

Wrath, if I may presume to call them so. They were not the result of fiery reflexions preceeding as usual, but appear'd to my Sense, as a Storm of Wrath immediately beating in on my poor Soul. This fill'd me with dreadful expectation of final Execution; these more immediate Infiictions of Divine displeasure, turn'd my Mind from thoughts that first troubled me, which were swallow'd up of them, as a Land-Flood is by the breaking in of the Sea.

Some time after, it pleas'd God to give me some consistence of Spirit, by intervals. In one of them I walk'd abroad with some Friends, and was very solemn in my Discourse, aiming to do them Service: After this attempt, I retired more within my self, and this thought fix'd with great force and solemnity on my Mind; *viz.* That Souls were continually passing out and into the World, in some place or other: and close thinking on this Subject, thro God's Assistance, had almost as powerful an effect, as if I had seen all; and he has since made it of Use to me, blessed be his holy Name.

I return'd home with an unusual calm in my Spirit, and immediately fell to drawing up some Rules to order my future Practice by; resolving to leave the final State of my Soul to God's good Pleasure; and in the mean while devote my self entirely to his Service: But God had not done with me yet, as I imagin'd.

I was

I was not sensible till now of the predominancy of some Vices ; nay, that they were at all in me ; and had any tax'd me with them, no doubt I had accounted them unreasonably censorious. O how deceitful and desperately wicked is the Heart of Man ! a Consideration that should make us all very suspicious of our selves, least careflessness and conceit, suffer some Vice or other inobservantly to steal in upon us, and work it self so fully into our Constitution, till we lose all sight and sense of it, as being fully of a piece with us. Finding my self thus free for a Day or two, I forthwith resolved to try Exercise, and change of Air ; to confirm, what I thought so happily begun. I slept well some Nights, which I had not done for many Months pass'd, so set forward leaving all to God. I had now a perfect contempt of every thing, I formerly set my Heart upon, I was only ambitious of being useful, and getting God my Friend and Portion.

Travelling a few Miles in this seeming composure, I began to feel my self heavy ; and that stay given to my Spirit, gradually withdrawing ; till at length I found I could no longer under-prop my Soul with the hopes and resolutions I lately conceiv'd and rely'd on : As I jog'd on, I felt my old Horrors bearing hard in upon me, but hoping to shake them off, I pursu'd my Design. The Day was cool, my Horse easy, my Body as before ; but all within began to be in a most disconsolate hurry.

*In script:
this is an
argument
God him-
self makes
use of for
Lenity &
Forbear-
ance &c
(after
Noah's flood
&c.)*

Thus I pass'd the Remains of the Way,
 and can't but see a strange over-ruling
 Hand of Providence, that my Fears should
 not drive me back again; being much near-
 er home than the place I intended for;
 and press'd hard with my old amazing
 Troubles: The half of which would have
 hurri'd me back at another time. But
 God, it seems, had a Message to send me up-
 on, which he forc'd me fully to discharge,
 to the infinite Terror of my Self and all
 about me: For being now out of the reach
 of a regular Management; matters were
 brought soon to extremity, to my farther
 Discipline, and others Instruction; in which
 the Hand of God remarkably appear'd.
 As I drew near my Journies end, nothing
 but Terrors fac'd me; so amazing, that
 I lost my way, tho' well acquainted with
 it. I felt inexpressible Anguish and De-
 spair in my wretched Soul, to that degree,
 that I could scarce keep my Horse. I was
 fill'd with an astonishing sense of God's
 Frowns, and Displeasure; and to my ap-
 prehension, the Heavens seem'd to threat-
 en me, as if they would drive me into the
 Earth. This expression appearing so fan-
 ciful, may occasion some to drop a Smile,
 with a suitable Censure: But let such
 strangers to these kind of Exercises know,
 if they had felt but half what I did,
 they would be pass'd jesting. I don't sup-
 pose any thing real of that nature, I ex-
 press, influenc'd me; but only that such
 a sense was then vigorously and irresisti-
 bly impress'd upon me; which I believe

no judicious Person, will think impossible. I may seem a Barbarian to some that read this, and other Passages; but such as have pass'd a Sea of Troubles, and felt the Sting of fiery Serpents as they went through the howling WilderNESS of Distress; they understand the Language of *Canaan*; to such I shall speak in their Mother-Tongue.

At the shutting in of the Evening, with much ado I reach'd home; but with such visible Consternation in my Countenance, as startled all about me. Every place look'd full of dread and horror; I long'd for Rest, but dreaded Bed; I was no Company for any, but worst of all to my Self. I was mute in all Discourse, but clamorous within; I retir'd at last, and thro' God's Mercy got some Rest.

I spent the next Day in deep concern, tho' with less pungency of thought: I strove to stifle and disguise it, but all in vain. The next Night I was restless, and greater agitations follow'd that Day, which put me on thoughts of returning; but upon every such Design, I found my horrors redoubled upon me very unaccountably, tho' very remarkably; which at last scar'd me quite out of all such Intentions.

Matters now grew worse, and hastened to a consummation of Distress. I was now so overwhelm'd with despairing Thoughts, that I refus'd to rise till Noon. A religious Person coming to my Bed-side, endeavour'd to encourage me; telling me

∴ this trouble would turn to a spiritual Advantage, which thro' God's infinite Mercy prov'd so, to whom be eternal Praise thro' Jesus Christ. I got up at last in great bitterness of Soul, refusing to eat, or be comforted. I made heavy charges against my Self; Despair overspreading my Soul, extorted Confessions to my disadvantage, but no relief: Justly did a holy God suffer me to be expos'd and tormented by that; I would not seasonably acknowledge to my own Ease and his Glory.

I was prevail'd upon, tho' with great reluctance, to go to Church: I had a very mean opinion of the Party that Preach'd, having ever observ'd him strangely perfunctory in all his Performances; running the Prayers over without reverence or decency: But now such an awe was struck on my Spirit, as tho' I had heard a Voice from Heaven, till Terror and Astonishment possess'd every part of me. The greatest part of the Discourse I apply'd to my Self, which came with such irresistible force upon my Mind, as I ne'er felt before or since. I concluded God spoke to me by the Preacher's Mouth, and sign'd the Destruction of my Soul and Body by some expressions, then providentially made use of: They were very emphatical, suitable to my Circumstances, portending peculiar afflictions of Punishments, with terrible aggravating circumstances, both as to Loss and Pain; but above all, the power with which they press'd in upon me, was strangely singular. None can imagine or I express, the
twinges

twinges of utmost Despair I then felt; leaving me perfectly dismay'd and confounded; as if I had no Life left in me; expecting Death and Damnation every Minute, by some Judgment or other. I forbear particulars to prevent tediousness; I shall only add: Others were affected with some Passages as relating to me; which they acknowledged to me at my return very unadvisedly; it adding much to my confusion.

From this time, I continually expected to be made a fearful instance of divine Vengeance. All solicitations and Advices, had not the least effect, to assuage my Grief. I shunn'd Company, but could not bear my own Thoughts; the shadow of Death and Hell seem'd to hover about, and enclose me; especially after the reading of a Sermon that Evening, some press'd me to hear. 'Twas wholly on Temptation, urging the avoiding the occasions of Sin: How guilty they were that thro' neglect of this Duty, or by bold precipitate ventures, thrust themselves into the Mouth of it, how justly they were deserted by God, and left to the swinge of their Lusts, and the rage of the Devil. This and much more to the same purpose gaul'd me extremely.

The Door seem'd quite shut before; but now barr'd and bolted by divine Commission, I was confirm'd in these Sentiments as irresistibly, as if I had been certified by the Voice of God from the Clouds. All the indications concurring, were very lively

lively and surprizing, both in their nature and circumstances; but were fasten'd upon me with that force of impression, as is inexpressible.

I heard these two Sermons with more Terror than the *Israelites* the Thunder at the delivery of the Law: They exceedingly fear'd and trembled; but I fear'd till my Heart like *Nabal's* dy'd within me, and became like a Stone for stupidity. I thought the Almighty had pass'd Sentence as a Judge, and that I was arrested by Satan, the Executioner of his Wrath. This was the first time I was apprehensive of his Agency; which was, and still is as evident to me, as this is a Pen, I'm now writing with: and what quickly follow'd put it pass'd dispute; as one action confirms another, when things of the same nature are repeated, tho' with different circumstances.

I lay the greatest part of this Night in the Contemplation of all the Forms of Torment, an active fancy could devise; the result of which, was desperate unconcernedness. I believe this stupid State was order'd by a kind hand of Providence, to keep me from quite over-letting. In this Posture, at break of Day, I undauntedly put by the Curtain, with full expectation of seeing the Devil. It pleased God, I saw nothing, tho' the Evening following I felt too much of him, to my infinite Terror, and of all about me.

Finding the Night and Morning pass thus contrary to my sad forebodings, I began to resume a little courage: but immediately strange conceits obtruded themselves upon me, till at last they center'd in one more terrible than the rest. It may suffice to intimate, they all tended to compleat the Idea of my Misery, and make me suppose my self the very white of the Mark of Divine Vengeance. I had no Faith, at least in exercise, to repel these fiery Darts in this hour of darkness and desperate assaults; but the blessed God, most mercifully, tho' invisibly, supported me. These thoughts were injected to fill my Spirit with rancorous resentments against the ever Blessed God; my Mind was chafed with hideous Passions and Repinings, fretting impiously against the Almighty; imputing that to hatred and severity, that sprang from Love and kind designs full of Pity. I curs'd the Day of my Birth after some torturing reflexions on the Justice and Mercy of God; which I sawcily censur'd; seldom looking back on my past miscarriages, but to lessen them, by comparing them with others; thereby erecting a Stock, to graft soure prejudices and censures upon. I caught at every accident to blow up conceits, and strengthen'd the Delusion: In these terrible agitations of Mind and Body, I spent this forlorn Day, all expressive of inward Agonies.

All this was but a prelude to what pass'd that Evening. Towards the decline of the Day,

Day, I was more restless, till at length I fell into surprizing Transports, wild Postures, extravagant Expressions; all concurring to express my inward Convulsions. I no sooner betook my self to my Chamber, but I plainly discern'd, I was acted by another Spirit more than my own: Such strange Emotions in Soul and Body ensued, as perfectly convinced me they were preternatural; the sense of this made me desperate, and my behaviour was accordingly, both in Language and Action.

u 'Tis in vain to attempt a Description of what I felt within, at this time; and were the liveliest given, it could not be receiv'd in any proportion to the reality of the thing. It may suffice, what outwardly appear'd satisfy'd the Persons present fully of the true cause of all that then pass'd. I had read and heard enough of Satan's Power in this kind; and in this Illness had been caution'd about it: But alas! the notion of the thing, lay very loose and unheeded in my Mind; as it is, I fear, but a useless Opinion with too many that acknowledge it: But now ocular Inspection could not afford me clearer evidence of the thing, than my present Sensations; and the Operations they concluded in.

This dreadful Paroxysm, lasted near an Hour: the Fire of Hell was thrown into my Heart, and burst out at my Mouth, and affected ev'ry Member. Satan was now winding me up to the highest pitch, to express his envenom'd Malice against

poor Souls, and his implacable hatred of the ever blessed God, and his All-glorious precious Christ; the very pinnacle of his cursed Design; which he finish'd with something surprizingly strange. This astonish'd all about me, but my wretched Self much more, as privy to inward Emotions, and circumstances of Action, others could not observe, tho' the more obvious part of the Scene, fill'd all with amazement.

For some weighty Reasons, I shall mention the Words and Passages, but in general Terms; not to spare my self, but to prevent some ill Use might be made of them. At the thought and naming them, my very Heart, Hand, and all within and without me, should tremble. And I solemnly beg of God, for Sweet Jesus's sake, that those Words and Actions may ne'er be imputed to me another Day. For tho' all that pass'd was against my consent; yet my Sins having given my Enemy an advantage against me; I may justly fear; I'm so far responsible for what then was transacted.

In short then, the prime Design of the Prince of Darknefs, seem'd very remarkably levell'd against the *most adorable JESUS, the holy ever blessed SON of GOD, as the only SAVIOUR of the World*, while he actuated my Tongue in some Blasphemous Expressions, peculiarly against that Blessed One. There was such a concurrence of Words, Gestures, and other strange circumstances of Action conspiring to this Hellish Event, with-

without the least precedent or concomitant thought or intention of my own; as demonstrated all to be pure Devillism; and all my movements to be merely Mechanical, as acted by a foreign Principle. I was not at all sensible of the Tendency of the various Transactions: what harmony or subserviency the Parts had one to the other, nor what they jointly drove at till the full completion. My perception of things were as clear, as at any time; and I was very sensible I was not my own Master. Upon the very first extravagant Motion, I felt my self plainly in ill hands; and dreaded in general the upshot of the matter; but was without the least privacy, as to the particularity of the Design; till it came to the last finishing Strokes; which gave me a proof that carried with it the force of a Demonstration.

I pray God, such as reject reveal'd Religion, and entertain low thoughts of Jesus Christ, may seriously consider this Passage. Satan fights not against his own Kingdom: What he levels his most invenom'd Darts at, after a long series of artificial Preparations, we may be sure is a matter of no small consequence: What the Father of Lies with so much Industry and Sagacity, attempts to run down with the imputation of falsity, we have great Reason to believe is one of the brightest and most beneficial Truths. He fought now neither with great nor small, but with the King of *Israel*; the allusion is plain, and the design of it needs more
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an honest Heart, than any Comment. If any Deist or Unbeliever peruse this Paragraph, let it confound his cursed Tenets, or let him know assuredly, here's one Testimony more shall shortly rise up in Judgment against him to stop his Mouth for ever, with respect to any Pleas and Excuses; when he shall hear the Sentence of eternal and intolerable Wrath pass upon him from the very Person he now vilifies and denies; if he obstinately and finally persevere in his execrable Infidelity. Let the weak Believer assume courage in reading these Lines, and extract a Cordial to his Faith out of this Poison; as Blessed be God he has, that now exhorts him to it. So easy is it with God to bring Light out of Darkness, and Heaven out of the very center of Hell.

Begone thou foul pestilent Fiend; hast thou the impudence to deny Him, whose very Name makes thee tremble? Save thyself if thou canst, from the Wrath and Power of that Saviour thou wouldst deny: Down to thy Chains of Darkness, which reserve thee to the Terrors of the great Day; in the mean while I know thou believest and tremblest. Thou insolent Apostate Spirit; I here, in the Face of the Sun, abjure thee; and all those vile Expressions thou forc'd upon me. I disclaim, with utter abhorrence, both thee and them, in the Presence of God, Angels and Men; and here confess JESUS to be The Christ, the Son of the Blessed, of one Substance with the Father, God over all

all Blessed for ever, the only Saviour of the World; in whose mighty Merits and Intercession, I repose entirely all my hopes of Salvation. Deny, if thou dar'st, that Power that shortly will compleat thy Misery; in the mean while, may thy wicked Devices return upon thy own pate; and to express the greater detestation of thy execrable Designs, were it lawful, I'd use that Tongue thou once abus'd to Blaspheme Christ, the Son of the Blessed; to pray thy own Prayer backward; even that Jesus would torment thee before the time.

This dreadful dispensation being over, some sedateness for a time follow'd, tho' I concluded my Case was desperate. I betook my self at length to Bed, in absolute despair. All now forsook me, pitying me at a distance, as one abandoned by God, and consign'd over to Wrath; some intimations of their Sentiments of this kind, they drop'd at parting; all which, with much more to the same purpose, confirm'd me in my desperate Conclusions.

I kept my Bed all the next day, none coming near me, but such whose attendance was necessary: In this miserable plight, I lay expecting the worst that could befall me. 'Twas thought fit to take away some Blood; and a Vein being open'd, the Chirurgeon said, he ne'er felt any so hot before, as out of a Caldron; 'twas his very expression; which made me conclude my State was hopeless. I now seldom pray'd for my Self, but one coming into my Room, I ask'd him to pray by me, which

which he refused, for Reasons best known to himself; tho' I desire to have a very charitable Opinion of him, and the reasons of his denial.

I spent this Night in hideous fancies about future Torments, that crouded in upon me; having first spent the Day in continual Agitations of Mind that consumed my Flesh and Spirits: So sharp was my Blood, that some parts of my Body were excoriated; but alas! the anguish my poor Soul was in, left no room for regarding any bodily wants or pains.

One of a very disorderly Life, pay'd me a Visit: he had seen me before in the depth of my distress; the sight of which much terrify'd him, and brought him to serious reflexions. These together with the sad sight of my wretched circumstances, after a little discourse, drew from him this glorious confession, very pathetically express'd: *viz.* "Oh there is a most glorious God, and one Hours communion with him, is worth a World. This cut my forlorn Soul thro' and thro'; to think what a God he was getting an Interest in, and I had lost for ever: Seeing him in this disposition, I desired him to pray with me, which after a little boggling he did. His Prayer was exceeding short, and ran chiefly upon this Petition; that God would prepare us for all the sad changes that might happen before Morning. This I knew related to me; I perceived his apprehensions of my case were desperate, and fear'd his expressions were

H Ominous;

- Ominous; over-ruled by God to declare the fatal Issue of all. These thoughts uniting to make one Impression, drove me to my wits end; till amazement and stupidity relieved me.

u Thus did God hem me in on all sides, with his waves of unspeakable Terror: One praying, t'other refusing, equally tormented me: God shut me up and I could not come forth, till his pleasure releas'd me: none could help me now, nor hinder me then: While he was against me I found every thing else was; and when He appear'd for me, ev'ry thing assisted me. Let such as run to their little shifts in distress, consider; if they prosper, 'tis a Curse: If God design them good, he'll ne'er leave them, till he has whipp'd them home from their Idols; as a tender Father do's refractory Children. My Comforters were all like Job's, such as strove most to drop Oil into my Wounds, let something slip ere they had done, that more exasperated them; and others let fall such despondent expressions, as made them stink and corrupt.

This Acquaintance of mine, soon wore off this bright Conviction, and grew worse than ever; the same fate attending Convictions as does Afflictions; whom they soften not, they harden; which State persisted in, is a sure preparative for Hell: The Dross unpurg'd by the refining Fire, becomes fuel to feed the Flames of the infernal Furnace for ever. A Learned Divine expresses himself thus: " In all the Bi-
ble,

" ble, tho' it be a History of more than
 " 4000 years, we read of but one, that
 " was Converted just before his Death:
 " And we believe he did convert at
 " his first convincing Call: Rarely do a-
 " ny savingly convert, who do not upon
 " their first Convictions. *St. Austin's* sti-
 fled Convictions cost him dear: and *Spi-*
ra's case is well known. And I my self
 am another Precedent, who fear'd often,
 God would have made me a second *Spira*
 in my end: In my Distress I expected it,
 and nothing ran so much in my Thoughts
 as that shortly the miserable conclusion of
 my Life, would occasion a new Edition of
 that Title. I dare not say as this Learn-
 ed Man does; for I found God exceeding
 Merciful in renewing Convictions. The
 best use we can make of it is; to pray,
 and strive to improve every one given
 us, as not knowing but the first may be
 the last; but ne'er to despair on such a
 consideration.

A poor illiterate Man, was now the
 chief of my converse: who often gave me
 encouraging Advice; which, tho' meanly,
 and sometimes scarce intelligibly express'd,
 yet God blessed it; as I hope he will him
 for his charitable Design. God crowns
 sincerity with success, and triumphs in blef-
 sing weak Performances.

I perceiv'd my Lungs began now to
 be impair'd; I felt a continual irritation
 there from sharpness of Blood; so assur'd
 my self, I could not last long. And I'm
 satisfi'd I could not have held out at the

old rate many days longer, had not God's Providence interpos'd. But my extremity was God's opportunity; the first turn was now given to my Recovery, tho' I perceiv'd it not till many days after. Some useful Company now visited me, and tho' I was still under gloomy apprehensions, and broke now and then into great fits of Passion; yet by continual Discourse they kept my thoughts from preying upon me, as they did before without intermission. With much ado they work'd off the terrible impression, the Sermon before mentioned fix'd upon me. Talk made me reply; and this altercation afforded some relaxation to the bent of my thoughts; my Mind roll'd from one mournful Object to another, till I tumbled into an apprehension, I had committed the Sin against the Holy Ghost. Tho' this Fear press'd me hard with the sense of its unpardonableness; yet shifting prov'd my advantage; till it pleas'd God to bless me with some consistence of Spirit: Not but that horrors shook me by fits, but the keenness of my Thoughts for the most part, were alleviated.

In a little time it pleas'd God, after some tossing thoughts, to begin to scatter this dreadful Tempest. The dismal shades of this horrid long Night began to vanish; and the glorious Son of Righteousness arising with healing in his Wings, the blessed bright Day began to dawn to my relief. For which free and surprizing Grace; eternal Praises be ascribed to God and the

the Lamb that sit upon the Throne for ever and ever.

If any poor trembling Soul be dismay'd at the terror of some passages pass'd, as apprehending himself obnoxious to the same Discipline and Danger; let him rally his Hope and Courage, by reflecting seasonably on the boundless Power and Goodness of God; that cou'd and wou'd relieve so desperate a Case, if any on this side Hell may be call'd so. Let this Instance of infinite inexpressible Mercy, prevent Despair in all, while they do but live and breath. I conclude in the Words of the Apostle, if without Presumption I may apply them to my own State. *Howbeit for this cause I obtained Mercy, that in me Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering for a Pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to everlasting Life. Now unto the King Eternal, Immortal Invisible, the only wise God, be Honor and Glory for ever and ever. Amen.* 1 Tim. i. 16, 17.

Before I make some Reflexions on what is pass'd, I shall here insert a Passage that slippt my Memory. Had it occur'd to my Thoughts in due order of Time, it should have been mentioned sooner; but as it tends to illustrate the Justice of God in permitting matters to come to so great extremity, take it here as follows.

When I first remov'd for change of Air, at the latter end of my stay there, in a despairing Agony I form'd a Resolution between God and my own Soul, with great earnestness; that if he restor'd me,

I would diligently avoid all occasions of those Sins by which I had most dishonored him, and entirely dedicate my self to his Service.

But alas! no sooner had God taken off his Hand in some degree, and given me a little breathing, but I ventur'd into Company I knew had prov'd a snare to me: I went with a real design to talk seriously, and did so accordingly. But in a little time the Enemy got an Advantage, and by his impulses brought me to the very point of Ruin: But it pleas'd my compassionate Lord and Master, that has all Power in Heaven and Earth, to stop me in the midst of my Career, and by the mention of the sweet name of Jesus, that then happen'd to be made, stop'd me at the very brink of the Precipice: not that I suppose any Magical Charm in that Name, tho' a very lovely and delightful one; but that he himself made it operative, as he did his Look to *St. Peter*.

Tho' God rescu'd me thus, it cost me great regret, when I came to reflect on the breach of such solemn Engagements, and the ensuing guilt and danger. O the deceitfulness of my false Heart! should a living Man complain, for the Punishment of his Faults, after such a Provocation? Or any wonder Heaven pursues Perjury, with remarkable vengeance? How many are free among the Dead, and lost for less offences? How justly might the divine Vengeance have made an utter end of me; and

and hung me up in Chains for an Example to all bold Offenders? 'Tis of the Lord's Mercy alone I was not consum'd; I most freely acknowledge it to the glory of his most amazing Patience, after I had loaded him with my Sins, as a Cart is press'd with Sheaves, in the Language of the Prophet. God spar'd me endlessly, and did not stir up all his Wrath, when I was ripe for Excision. O never enough adored Goodness!

Observe here the folly and falsity, bound up in the Heart of Man; above all things deceitful and desperately wicked: Suspect thy own, search and research it, and thou shalt find one abomination hid under another, even to abysses. If Jealousie be requisite any where, 'tis here: Not to be Jealous here, is to be fearless of Ruin; above all keepings then, keep thy Heart; *for out of it are the Issues of Life*; as the Wise Man declares. If good Intentions are no sure grounds of security in approaching the Avenues of Temptation; how will Vows and Resolutions snap like *Sampson's Withs*, in all such Adventures, as are meerly grounded on Humor and Presumption? When Experience has shewn us fully and repeatedly our danger, and we engage against the occasions of it by solemn Promises, we must expect redoubled Assaults from Satan, to dip us in such double dy'd Guilt, as it proves if we fall into it; and consequently no pretences whatsoever should prevail upon us, to ap-

Prov. 4. 23.

proach the Verge of it, least some unhappy Spark catch upon our Tinder, and set all on a Blaze: If in any case, Duty by Proxy be allowable, 'tis surely in this.

I shall add one very memorable Observation more, to the Praise and Honor of the superabounding Grace, and Mercy of my ever blessed Lord and Master, which is this. That notwithstanding my many most heinous Provocations, and the length and violence of my Temptations, yet during the whole Process to the Period, I ne'er was under the least motion or solicitation, to make away my self. I remember not the least thought that had any tendency that way; which here I acknowledge was a most peculiar favour, entirely flowing from the boundless compassions of the ever blessed God, whose Nature is infinite Love. I must own, I deserv'd not the least Pity, but the contrary. I therefore ascribe it all, from the very bottom of my Heart, to his merciful interposition; and register it, as a Specimen of his exceeding special Condescension, since few or none escape it, under such pressing circumstances: And many, O, too too many have of late quite fallen by it. And considering the length and stress of my Temptations, that ran thro' the greatest part of my Life; and the last and strongest enduring many Months off and on, in its terrible onsets; I say, duly considering these and many other circumstances, my case appears strangely singular, and to my self amazingly prodigious. And
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since I can't express my self in terms becoming so signal an occasion, let what's inexpressible be express'd, as best it may, by silent Wonder, and solemn Adoration.

Having faithfully related matter of fact, I proceed to some short Reflections. Some slips there may be as to niceties of Time, tho' I endeavour'd to be punctual, that matters might appear in a truer Light; and some things of lesser moment I omitted, to bring all into a lesser compass. As for being impos'd upon my self; such as presume so, after an impartial reflection on what follows, are left to their own Sentiments. I obtrude nothing with an air of confidence on any Man; *let every Man be fully persuaded in his own Breast.*

My business here, is not with unreasonable Men, that have not Faith; I leave them to the sensible Proofs they demand; which I'm sure they will have first or last. To what purpose is it to attempt to answer the Cavils of such, which are as endless as their Humors and Fancies? Whose interest it is, not to believe any thing of this nature; at least they conceive so; and therefore resolve not to believe; but by sophistry and confidence, to baffle the brightest Conviction, and look Truth it self out of Countenance, by the force of a sturdy Resolution. The whole Clan of Materialists, Scepticks, Deists, sneer at all Essays of this nature; burlesque and pelt them with their mechanical Phrases, and little pert Sayings. All the return I shall
make

make to their fleering Sarcasms, is, That for Men to laugh themselves to Death, in fact, is no Solæcism; and that I have seen poor Wretches go grinning to Execution.

These Men receive no more Impressions from Discourses of this nature, than Flints do from Seals. And there's another sort, as unstable as Water; who, like that, no sooner receive an Impression, but lose it. Curiosity leads both sometimes to peep into serious Books, to meet with a Scratch for their Itch, not for Cure, but Pleasure. I wish I could hope, the worst that's likely to befall such, is, to meet with a disappointment.

'Tis for the sake of the real Christian; to satisfy, as I'm able, the judicious and inquisitive; to Arm and Strengthen the Weak; to Comfort and Encourage the Doubting and Despondent; who, I hope, by God's Blessing (which I earnestly implore) will receive the impression as Wax does from the Seal. Good People, tho' they believe the agency of the Devil in some cases, are yet too apt to overlook it in many; and consequently don't so oppose him as they might.

I'll freely acknowledge the great power of Fancy and Melancholy; that many things are justly imputed to the natural prevalency of that Disease, and rampancy of that Power: That when it's complicated in this manner, and Imagination is acted by the disorders of the Blood and Spirits, strange and ridiculous things have

have been believed and perform'd? This and much more I freely assent to, and yet I'm bold to say, that in many of these cases, Satan is also very busy, tho' often insensibly: He loves to fish in troubled Waters; those are his choicest nicks to do the greatest mischief with most Success, because with least observation; cunningly blending his poisonous Insinuations, with the natural operations and effects of Diseases, by most, not at all suspected.

For proof of this, consult the many dreadful Temptations, grafted upon a Melancholy disposition; whether from Temperament natural or adventitious; by Crosses, Disappointments, &c. in the World. Some fear Want in the midst of Affluence; and some Die for fear of Dying: Some in desperate sadness, whine and groan away their Days, when they miss of what their Hearts were set upon: Others are continually tormented with black and desponding Thoughts, till they turn their own Executioners.

Go in any of these cases, or the like, which are endless, to a Divine; and he'll send you to the Physician; which, tho' ever useful when matters are at this pass; whether the disorder begin in the Mind or Body, because they immediately affect one the other mutually; yet we know all Methods of Physick are frequently baffled; till at length the Physician remit his Patient to his Ghostly Father, to settle the Conscience.

I wish this charge against some Divines, may fall upon fewer, than I fear it does,
and

The People being as much over-prone to ascribe natural Diseases to the Devil, as many Physicians are to ascribe diabolical distempers and vexations to Nature. Dr. Moore *Myst. of Godl.* pag. 113.

and that more Physicians were impleadable upon the part that concerns them. As ignorant unthinking People are apt to mistake some natural Distempers, for what's supernatural: So the learned are as ready to run into the opposite extream, and account Philosophically for the strangest appearances.

When matters are come to this deplorable pass, that neither Counsels nor Medicaments, have any effect; then the Case seems out of doubt, that the Party is under strong Temptation: But when God renders either of the means, or both, conjunctly successful; all difficulties are then usually solv'd, by the Laws of Mechanick Powers, or the meer cessation of the uneasy reflections of the Mind, which tho' in great part true, as to the more immediate Causes; yet the more remote, tho' social and powerful, I mean the injections of Satan, are frequently over-look'd, by a customary non-attendance, by too many.

I'm not so vain as to suppose; that those I now address my self to, deny or wholly over-look diabolical Operations: But what I drive at is this; that in lesser indispositions, and Temptations of this kind, Satan's agency is too little thought of, and natural means too much cried up and depended on, tho' in due place, they certainly have their subserviency. Proper Evacuations, Alteratives and Opiates, I found in my own Case very necessary and useful: To reject then the Means, telling the Physician he can do them no Service, be

because Conscience is out of the reach of Medicine, as is the usual custom of too many; is foolish and ridiculous. Some despise Means, others dote on them; both are extremes very faulty and dangerous, and tho' so distant, yet they often beget one the other, thro' Humane frailty: The one tempts God, the other neglects him: The one nullifies the Creature, the other Idolizeth it: The one will have God at his beck to work Miracles, and change the course of Nature to relieve him; the other will have nothing to do with him, but pins his Faith entirely upon second Causes; is not the medium clear and plain? as evident as the Light? How often are these preposterous Methods blasted, that God may vindicate his Honor, and Men receive Instruction?

'Tis easy to conceive what extremities the ferment and fury of the Blood and Spirits naturally bring upon us; and what use an invisible Agent may make of these disorders by injecting his fiery Darts, like Oil to the flames, to encrease the combustion. All know how powerfully Opiates check these exorbitant Motions: And it is as easy to conceive how foreign Suggestions and Impressions, must abate of their Vigor and Efficacy, for want of these occasions, especially if we suppose a parity of application and influence in both Cases, which is rationally to be supposed; because let Nature be in the best plight possible, if Satan's Commission be enlarg'd, we know he can quite pervert it, as in the case of
Job;

Job; and so act his part to the utmost extent. But we know he can't budge a Hairs breadth beyond Divine permission, to our great comfort and only safety; and therefore to suppose him to proceed arbitrarily, and encrease his Onsets at pleasure; is to beg the Question in this case, and leave no room for Argument.

So Sceptical are some, that they'll believe nothing but what they see; so deny the existence of Spirits. For the same reason they may desire to see with their Ears, hear with their Eyes, and understand by the Motion of their Hands and Feet; Spirits naturally being as unsuitable Objects to our Sensories, as this supposed transposition of Faculties and Objects, is to the regular State of Nature: They may be intimately present with us, without our Cognizance; unless they assume Vehicles, or otherwise accommodate themselves to the capacity of our Senses. Others entertain such gross conceptions of them, that they can't conceive how they mingle themselves with their Spirits; as if the Devil could not act but where he appears, and finds room to shew his Cloven Foot, and wag his Satyrs Tail. Some again, have so criticiz'd and subtiliz'd upon their nature, till they have forgot the danger they were in from their Operations; and in the issue have only puzzled themselves and others, with a few airy useless Notions. The profitable knowledge of these things, consists chiefly, in conceiving them as Active, Mischievous,

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Imperceptible Powers; and in arming against them accordingly. The holy Spirit in Scripture, gives us very useful hints; but none to gratify curiosity; which we have small reason to expect, since that first ruin'd us, and gave Satan the Power he has against us.

He is stiled there the Red Dragon; to denote his Bloody cruel Designs. The *roaring Lion*, going about seeking whom he may devour; to express his Strength, Fierceness, Terror, and Activity in destroying. The old Serpent; to signify his craft and experience, to circumvent. The Prince of Darkness; insinuating his clandestine methods. The Prince of the Power of the Air; hinting their Dominion, Numbers, and Complotments. Are small matters couch'd in these Terms? Do such expressions as are mention'd *Eph. 6. 11*, to *19*. insinuate small difficulties and dangers? We are there also furnish'd with a compleat suit of Armor to oppose them; and with Instructions how to use it: 'Twill be very conducive then to our safety, to study and improve our Skill by Exercise: To prepare in Peace for War; lest we be at a loss for Weapons or dexterity to use them, when the time of Action surprises us. Add to this the reading of such Books as treat of these Subjects: And here take the advice of experienced Champions; such as Bishop Hall, Capel, Gurnall, Gilpin, &c. where Treasures of Experience are to be met with. The advantages our Enemies have against us, as
great

great as they are, yet shall not ruine us ; if
 Jam. 4. 7. we follow the Advice of the holy Ghost ;
 to resist the Devil stedfastly by Faith ;
 1 Pet. 5. 8, 9. to be Sober and Vigilant ; to draw nigh to
 God, &c. then the Promise runs, he will
 Rom. 16. 20. flee from you. And the God of Peace shall
 bruise Satan under your Feet shortly. Which
 Promises under the Broad Seal of Heaven
 are a blessed Security.

Whether Melancholy begin in the Mind
 or Body first, as certainly it does in both
 very variously ; it continues not long a
 meer natural Disease, unless in some very
 peculiar Cases ; where God may for wise
 Reasons restrain Satan ; which it may be
 seldom, if ever, happens wholly : that when
 God don't thus interpose, he infallibly
 some way improves the opportunity ; these
 Seasons being handles for him to lay the
 faster hold of us.

That when God suffers this ; 'tis for our
 Sins ; whether in the Good, for their
 Chastisement and Improvement ; or in the
 Bad, to awaken and amend them ; or as
 God's Executioner, to torment them before
 the time.

That God's holy Spirit convinces us of
 Sin, &c. by rousing Conscience, blazoning
 God's Wrath, and setting his Terrors in
 array against us ; holding the Eye of the
 Soul glaring on its Guilt ; its multiplicity
 and aggravations ; God's Justice and hot
 Displeasure.

Upon this natural Conscience trembles, and
 stings the Soul with fiery Reflexions : These
 agi-

agitate the Blood and Spirits, which in a little time pervert the course of Nature; particularly filling the Fancy with endless Scenes of Horror, which renders the Disease complicate.

Upon all comes Satan, injecting his fiery Darts without intermission; aggravating Sin; filling the Mind with despairing, jealous, hard thoughts of God; representing him inexorable, Sin unpardonable, Hell and endless Torment, insupportable and unavoidable: fixing the Idea of a black and dismal Eternity, with all the Schemes of Misery the Fancy can devise; till the Soul, quite amaz'd with such a load of Wrath, sinks into the utmost Despondency; ready to dissolve at the apprehension of such an Ocean of Misery; and if God support not the poor Wretch invisibly, it lies down in anguish for ever: This renders the Case consummate.

Innumerable are the Preparatives which Providence employs, as introductory to this sad condition: All sorts of Afflictions, natural Temper, great Guilt, a sleepy secure Life, which when thus alarm'd affords infinite store for the Worm of Conscience to feed upon.

Satan seems more intent upon our eternal Destruction, than our present Torment; tho' where he can, he attempts both with utmost Malice.

He disturbs not Men in their Sins; but is willing all should run glib and smooth while they are his Vassals, and advance his Kingdom; but if they are rouz'd by
 I any

any awakening Providence; he then plies every Oar of diligence to lull them asleep again, by Diversions, Company, or Pleasures. But if they refuse this Opium; will be serious, and make towards Heaven; then he'll harrafs and terrify them; raking deep into the dunghil of their wicked Hearts, to blast their Hopes, and nip their Endeavours; and so by his infernal Sparks, attempts to Fire the Soul; till it burn down the Lamp of Life; and by the weight of final Despair, plunge to the bottom of Hell. But for such as are out of his clutches, they shall be sure to feel now and then some scratches of his Talons; at least his poisonous Breath, which tho' it kill not, will yet be very offensive. This is the reason why so many holy Souls, are continually teis'd and baited with his cursed onsets; while the Wicked pass their Days merrily without check or controul; a Case too common to slip our observation. Thus far in general.

I shall glance at some particulars.

How fair a Conviction did God give me very early? And how signally did he repeat it? How just and kind too was he, to bring on Troubles, to awaken my sleepy Soul? To spend such variety of Cost and Care, to cultivate so resty and untractable a Creature? How might he have curs'd me once for all, by throwing up the Reins of Government upon the Neck of my wicked Will and Desires?

My

My Temperament was naturally Sanguine, the reverse quite to Melancholy; but guilt bred fear and thoughtfulness, which in time pervert the natural crasis of the Blood and Spirits; these set Fancy on work to hatch and multiply more; which like a Stone cast into the Water, propagates circular undulations endlessly: Much more when Satan's permitted to strike it; How will Wave rise upon Wave, till we start at our own shadows? This was my Case, thro' the greatest part of my Life; and tho' a lamentable one; yet was it wisely ordered and over-ruled by God.

I endeavour'd to rally all the Forces of Reason and Resolution, against the Legions of these rebellious Shadows, but they often mutined and refus'd Service; nay, often went over to strengthen the Enemy. How easily does a weak Man surprize a strong one a Sleep? How does the Body grow strong by Exercise; and the faculties of the Soul by frequent Operations? On the contrary, all languish and droop under sloth and neglect. To what a predominancy then must Fancy rise, under continual employ, while Reason rusts out in disuse? If an easie Master keep not up his Authority, how soon will a bold pragmatical Servant gain upon him, till he domineer and tyrannize?

The Fancy, all allow, Satan may interfere with, by his Suggestions and Impressions: And thus he may trouble, cloud, and strangely affect the higher Powers of the Soul by this proximity. Tho' God

alone has a Key to the Heart; yet when permitted, he can knock at the Door, observe Answers by effects, operations, and many passages that come within the reach of his Observation: All which he improves with the utmost Skill and malignity to our detriment. He continually solicits for these accesses, and our follies often encourage and give him an opportunity to prevail: Strange power he had over holy *Job*, upon his challenge, by way of trial of his Integrity; and much more we may suppose God may allow him in some kind or other; while we unnaturally renounce Allegiance to our rightful Lord, and submit to a Usurper: Tempt the Tyrant, to tempt and Torment us, by bold Presumption and sottish Security. And when he acts not his rage with open violence, he often vents his Malice more silently and inwardly, but no less successfully.

'Twas just for a holy God to give me up to Satan's Tyranny, when I threw off his easy Yoke, and the government of my Self; that I might read my Sins in my Sufferings, as in so many capital Letters. When the soft Voice of Reason, God's Word and Spirit were neglected, Conscience clamor'd, Fancy set in and eccho'd Wo, continual Wo, of all sorts: This made the clamor doleful, and almost perpetual. When Conscience was gagg'd, Fancy rav'd; an unweildy and ungovernable Power, neither to be brib'd nor muzzled; till at length God thundred from Heaven upon me,

me, and Satan led me to open Execution. I doubt not but he ply'd me with these false alarms before, that he might beat up my quarters with the more Success, and fall on where I was weakest; hoping sometime to carry me by Storm, under covert of these false attacks; which indeed he very near effected: Ever diverting my Eye from seeing, and taking up the Root of the Controversy between God and my Soul; the only true method of safety.

Had all this been the meer produce of disorders in Nature, and the thence resulting Vibrations of the Phantacy, tho' I allow their concurrency: I say, had all these been purely Mechanical, the Disease growing inveterate, had scarce been curable, at least, I'd been very subject to a Relapse. But after Means had been used long without Success, any farther than as to abatement of the violence of some Symptoms; nay latterly had quite in a manner been left off; then thro' God's astonishing goodness I recover'd in such a sudden surprizing way, as indicates plainly whence the deliverance came. And for a farther Proof, and to my great comfort, I since have continu'd free for many Years successively, almost without the least molestation; which before I could scarce avoid for a few Days: What did affect me of this kind, to any degree of concern, was but for a few Minutes,

Any that observe the various Passages of my Life past, will plainly perceive a gradation of Sins and Judgments; which center'd finally in a desperate complication of Sin and Misery, with the utmost danger of what was infinitely worse.

The Heavens lower'd long before the Storm began: God's Lightning preceded his Thunder: He convinc'd and warn'd before he struck home. When I contriv'd by carnal Mirth and Company to divert uneasie Thoughts; the Clouds thickned and gathered the faster upon me: More peculiarly still after venturing on the occasions of great Temptations, after Warnings, Vows, Reproofs, and frequenting Plays; where God arrested me with his Terrors most remarkably, upon the very spot.

All unimprov'd, brought on those Thunder-Claps, that struck me to the brink of Hell. My Lusts made me forget my Duty to approach my Lord's holy Table; and after, when I complied, I prepared so carelessly, and drew near with such a formal, unbelieving, unsanctified Heart; as I have often thought, did in a special manner draw down his Vengeance; and wondered it did not utterly consume me; as I'm confident it has many.

How just was God in pointing me to that confounding Sentence, by a peculiar Providence, to leave me no room for hope, when I took Sanctuary in thoughts of longer Life, instead of immediate humblings; what so overwhelm'd me, was but a crude, unguard-

unguarded Expression, that might easily have been seen thro'. But he must understand Heavens displeasure at his Crimes, who reads by the light of a Ray from the Sun of Righteousness, when he is very angry. My vain hopes about Futurity, were spun out of the bowels of Fancy; and Fancy swallow'd them up quick immediately: O the Justice of God, and the Folly bound up in my Heart!

I smarted the more I'm confident, for the neglect of paternal Advice; let the Rebellious consider it, and know assuredly, God may be a slow, but will be a sure Avenger of any degrees of such unnatural contempt.

What I may say appertaining to those dreadful and peculiar Horrors I related above, as happening to me but twice in a singular manner; must be with all humility and modesty, as becomes me on so awful an occasion. I dare not determine any thing, but only express what my Apprehensions were, while under the intolerable pressure of them; and so leave the Reader to his own Judgment.

I choose rather to attribute them to the angry Frowns of the Almighty, the direct Rays of his Wrath, than the agency of Satan; not only because the apprehension of his immediate hand in them, fasten'd then strongly on my Spirit, but because the Scriptures very much favour such a Construction, and so abundantly, as needs no quotation.

I know Scripture and Experience testify Satan to be the Executioner of God's Justice, and so may be called God's Hand, as wicked Men are: And *the Rod of his Anger, and the Staff in their Hand, his Indignation*: But notwithstanding, *David and Heman* in the depth of their Distress, express themselves as having to do with God immediately; as appears from many pathetic expressions in some Psalms. After all, let the dispensation be mediate or immediate, which I dare not determine; this I'm sure of, the sense of it is intollerable, and time will be much better spent in serious endeavours to avoid it, than critically to pry into the nature and manner of it. If thus from Satan, it agrees with the Notion of a Learned Man, who compares the Buffetings of Satan to sharp Stakes Persecutors used to torment Christians to Death by.

ἐν δὲ τοῖς μοῖς
σκόλοισι τῇ
σάρκι. In illa
phrasi allusio
fit ad fudes
illas assu-
lasq; quibus
perforata sunt
corpora
christiano-
rum: σκόλοισι
fudem signifi-
cat præacu-
tem. Dr. Ar-
rowsm. Taët.
Sacr. p. 187.

The sower hard thoughts I entertained of God, his Dealings and Designs, I question not but Satan had a great hand in them: First injecting them, and then sharpening the Edge of my own Reflections, by keeping them in continual agitation. I had been too great an Enemy to Free-Grace, at least in the practic Notion of it, and had thwartled much in dispute against it, for the sake of the popularity of the Arguments of the adverse Party. And now God suffered the Tempter to impose upon me the belief of final Reprobation, as to my self, in the severest sense.

How

How just was God in suffering my Sore to fester, and run in the Night? to use the Psalmist's expression; while I refus'd to have it search'd to the bottom; labouring to skin it over by half Confessions, till at last in my Pangs and Agonies, as tho' extorted from me, I discover'd it to a very unfit Person, who afterward publickly made sport with it in his Cups and Company. 'Twas the very Party that made that glorious Confession in my extremity; about the Blessedness of Communion with God, preferable to a World. O the dreadful Ingratitude of that poor Creature to his God and his Friend! God forgive him, and have Mercy on him for Jesus's sake.

That strange pacateness, which lasted several Days in the midst of my Illness, indicates more than meer Nature, was the Root of the Disorder; and that sudden seeming Cure that encourag'd me to take a Journey, and the great Change ensuing when half way, with the strange Impressions that follow'd, confirm the same. Riding and a supposed agitation of Humors, were so far from producing this alteration, that the same Exercise has sometimes reliev'd me: The Vigor Thoughts drove in upon me with; their continuance, and what follow'd, with many other circumstances, prove abundantly what I drive at: besides such an Effect was no way proportion'd to the supposable Cause, and had scarce any affinity with it: My Body was well purg'd, Alteratives us'd; and upon such Preparatives, Exercise, this especially is allow'd rather to

to brighten, than cloud the natural Spirits.

God convinc'd me of my Folly, in over-valuing or despising Instruments, and not looking enough to him, who works as he pleases; who can blast the best, and make the meanest effect the greatest things; as I found now by sad, but very sensible experience.

That ridiculous Fancy obtruded with such violence upon my belief, convinc'd me, who was in great part the Author of many tormenting Imaginations, which I formerly reputed the meer effect of the Spleen.

I had seen many years before, one under the anguish of Despair; his Body macerated, his Visage dreadful, his Actions and Words terrifying and amazing: One of his Expressions was this; "Were my
"Flesh torn from my Bones with red hot
"Pincers, 'twould be Ease compared to the
"anguish of my Mind. I made no use of this fair warning, till God cast me into the Furnace, to feel what I did not enough believe, *viz.* how terrible Guilt, Temptation, terrors of Conscience, and the Wrath of God were.

All those strange Words, Actions, Sensations, that brought me to such extremity; are a full proof what Power Satan had over me: I as firmly believe it as if I had seen him; and have as full and demonstrative a proof to my Sense, by some extraordinary Operations I felt, but can't to the Life express; as tho' he had ap-
pear'd

pear'd to me. How can this reasonably be supposed imputable to the activity of Fancy, wound high by fear and expectation? If this were a just Plea, why was not the effect answerable, in the very Method Fancy prescrib'd and expectation suggested? which is ever the natural Issue of all fanciful Motions.

If this be true, as doubtless it is, and must be granted by all the Rules of Experience, ever the best Guide, as being the genuine process, and most apt and natural conclusion of all the Movements of Imagination; why then did I not see the Devil, which I fully expected, but feel him, which I ne'er thought of? The Providence of God so order'd it, as quite to cross the Stream of Fancy; a thing never known, when that is the sole Agent.

Whence came all those strange Expressions, Gestures, Operations, Influences, all exactly conspiring to such a sad End and Design, as would plainly appear by a relation of particulars; and that without the least previous apprehension of any such matter either in general or particular? And yet that all these Passages should orderly succeed one another, till they center'd in such a malicious Event? The Matter in all its particularities and circumstances, I hinted in the Relation but in general terms; but were the Reader as fully appriz'd of the thing as it was in reality; I would not question his assent.

The

The whole Scene was full of the most hideous spiteful Blasphemy, that the Wit of Men or Devils could devise: And tho' the Heart of Man be pregnant enough with wickedness, yet I can't conceive it able to vent such things at random, that carry such a Face of exquisite Contrivance, and most malicious Design: at the same time horrors and reluctancy expressing themselves with the utmost detestation of the Fact.

Many Years before, I had an itch upon me to see a Spirit, as they usually Phrase it: How justly then might God now have given the foul Fiend commission to have made his appearance, to my infinite Terror? What a Monster is Unbelief and Curiosity? To what dangers do they expose us? Should God grant all our mad, foolish Wishes, we need no more to ruin us: but Praised be his holy Name; in Judgment he remembred Mercy: Tho' he suffered him to express his rage otherwise, yet he restrain'd him in this Point: Tho' the other Method is no less real, yet this was more formidable; and as circumstances then stood, might have undone me had God permitted it. Notwithstanding I desire to read his Justice in what happened, for my idle Talk about the Devil; declaring confidently Temptation to be more from the Devil within; as many do, who have no more practic sense of his Being and Operations, than as if all related of him, was a mere idle Story: For this, together with my former curiosity,

I be-

I believe God now chastized me; as well as for my many other grievous Provocations.

Men of loose Faith and Morals, upon Discourses of this nature, will often, in a careless manner, pretend to thank God they never saw any thing worse than themselves; when their Lives and formal way of expressing themselves, intimate they are so far from any sense of such a Mercy, that they rather seem thus to express their Infidelity and Prophanity. Much more boldly, will some disclose their Opinions, even with insolent demands and scoffs, expressing the confidence of their Unbelief in this kind. Satan has fast hold of such, and will ne'er attempt to undeceive them till it's too late: To which purpose *Wierus* has a memorable Passage, which he had from one present: An Exorcist made some bold challenges to the Devil, being put to a stand in some Enterprize: The Devil answered in Latin: *Quem pleno jure in postremo die possidebo, quid opus est illum tentare?*

*De Praestig.
Dem. p. 596.*

Let none say, I lay all on the Devil in the Mystery of Temptation; I disclaim such pretences. This would look like a piece of self-justification, loathsome in the sight of a holy jealous God: No, we may falsely accuse him, but never thereby vindicate our selves. St. James tells us plainly; that a Man is tempted, when drawn away of his own Lust and enticed: And certainly we have corruption enough within us to ruin us, were there no Devil without to tempt

tempt us. But then it must be own'd, if we hoist Sail, he'll be sure to fill it with a brisk Gale. If we strike Fire by the collision of lustful Thoughts : either at his instigation, or from our own natural promptitude ; he'll without fail blow the Coals and spread the Fire as the Wind does the Flames, till they consume us and all about us.

Cruel Bloody-minded Men, are like those among the Tombs possess'd with Devils, exceeding fierce, so that none can come within their reach with safety : Whence came else those hellish Torments Persecutors in all Ages have devis'd, that a Fiend cou'd scarce outdo them ? And what are impure Libertines, but *Gaderene* Hogs possess'd by unclean Devils, hurrying them down Precipices, into the dead Sea of impurity ? Call this Possession, Obsession, or what you please, he has full Power over them, to draw them into all Wickedness . What a Learned Man says of some giddy headed Hereticks, is applicable to these Men : “ I dare say, a Man
“ may find out a greater number of true De-
“ moniacks among them, than Christ or his
“ Apostles are said to Cure.

Dr. Moore's
Myst. of Godl.
p. 111.

Thus by degrees, are Men led Captive by Satan at his pleasure. And who can eject the strong Man arm'd, till a stronger than he come ? None can rescue any out of the Clutches of this Leviathan, but the Arm of the Almighty. 'Tis certainly his great Artifice to keep us in Ignorance of his Power, and our Sins that expose
us

us to it. We can't suppose Convictions come from him, who loves to keep us nodding in security: It's the Office we know of the holy Spirit describ'd in Scripture; but when that Blessed one shines with a strong Ray into a dark guilty Soul, what a Hell of Torment is there in the Conscience, till he reveal the only Remedy, Christ Crucified? And now it's Satan's season to aggravate Sin, to accuse and exasperate Conscience: A poor Creature can scarce bear the weight of the Reflexions of his own Mind; and if Satan now be permitted to mix his Brimstone with the Fire of Conscience, how will it smother out the last spark of Hope, and soure and canker the Soul, with impious Thoughts and hatred of God himself?

I now expect the fate that attends Narratives of this kind. It's now a days become fashionable to doubt of these matters: Weakness and Credulity being often imputed to such as do but hesitate. If they don't immediately explode all as Dream and Fancy, they are rank'd among the Simple, that believe every thing. To appear singular out of the modish dress of the Times, some think derives observation and contempt. This makes some of good Character, affect the Terms of the Men of Sense; to make too bold with the Language of the Sceptick Party. The World is full of Wickedness and Forgery; many idle Stories have been trump'd up and obtruded upon credulous People, by weak or wicked Men; and because
there

there is counterfeit Coin, some scruple good Mony. If Men will act thus unreasonably, I'll take comfort and acquiesce in the faithful discharge of my Duty.

Others again, to leave no Stone of Ingratitude unturn'd, will retort and say, I have taken pains to expose my Self. But let such know without farther reply; that I have received too much at the Hand of the Blessed God, to stick at building his Honour on the Ruins of my own. Do thou *that standest, take heed lest thou fall; be not high minded, but Fear*, let the Advice of the Holy Ghost soften, if it prevail not quite to stop the Mouth of thy Censure. Remember there are dumb Devils as well as noisic ones, and many are led captive by them, that hear no gingling of their Chains. Devils don't always tare People they Possess, tho' sometimes they do at their departure. 'Tis their interest to conceal their Being and Power as much as may be, unless on some special occasions they are forc'd either by an over-ruling Hand of Providence, or in the Execution of their Fury.

I doubt not but the Devil had a hand in idle Stories of his own Appearance; or that of Ghosts, as usually term'd; on purpose to confound what has been real of that kind: A dexterous Exploit, in which he certainly finds his Earnings; many on these false Rumors, being more confirm'd in their Sadducism; and many good People become shaken in the Practic Notion at least of these things: Wicked
Men

Men act in this Case quite contrary to what they do in Lying: They tell Lies so long, till they believe them true; but accounts of Apparitions, till they believe all false. But O my Soul, take heed the impure Spirit return not, and find the *House swept and garnish'd, and he take unto him seven worse Spirits than himself, and so thy last State be worse than thy first.* Lord Jesus, who hast all Power, prevent it, I beseech thee, for thy Mercies sake. *Amen.*

Men generally run too deep into Mechanical Principles in their solutions of some Symptoms incident to cases of Melancholy, and some in this and every thing else, approve themselves perfect Materialists. As the Atomick Philosophy is of excellent use in the explication of the Phenomena of Nature, when God and his Providence are taken in; but without them the rankest nonsense; so in all Melancholy cases, Physick and the Sons of Art, are of admirable use, if just allowances are made, with suitable Provision for diabolical Temptations; but without them in most cases, tho' not all, both Agent and Patient, will find themselves miserably in the dark. Mr. *Greatrax* the Stroaker, in his account of the Cures he made, attributes some Diseases conjecturally to Evil Spirits, from some odd Symptoms he observed in their Cure, particularly of the Falling-Sickness. Much more may we suspect them in Melancholy cases; to a Proverb call'd, *Diaboli Balneum.*

Causabon of
Enthus. p. 81.
2d. Edit.

A Learned Man has the following Expressions. " When in matter of Diseases, " we oppose natural Causes to supernatural, whether Divine or Diabolical ; as " we exclude not the general Will of God, " without which nothing can be ; So neither the general Ministry, and Intervention of the Devil, who, for ought I know, " may have a hand in all or most Diseases, " to which Mortal Man (thro' Sin) is naturally liable." And a few Lines on " supposes a general concurrence or intervention of the Devil, in all that is Evil, whether Natural or Moral.

Some Good Men I meet with strangely warp'd by Philosophick Notions, even into a neglect of those cautions, their Christian Principles prescribe them. They easily overlook the agency of the Devil, in all but some notorious Instances ; as tho' under-ground Designs were of less pernicious consequence, or nothing was to be believed, but what our Senses put out of dispute.

By this Method they weaken one another, in their care and watchfulness, careless Opinions begetting careless Practices ; while just and right ones are the Mothers of caution and preservation ; and thus the common Enemy gets many Advantages. Much I know is written to excellent purpose on this Subject, to improvement of our circumspection : But alas ! few read them or duly consider them ; so take up with a useless Notion, and when they apply it to particular Instances, the
strength

strength of the Argument is quite lost; and what was applauded in the Theory, evaporates in the application; the force of all being generally evaded, unless in some more barefac'd astonishing Precedents.

'Tis of the last consequence to take this Distemper in time; for if Melancholy fix and get rooting, 'tis hard to remove. Pensive thoughts imprisoned multiply; Shame and reservedness, natural to the Distemper, plead for secrecy; but if they prevail, endanger safety. Small helps in Physick do more at first, than the greatest when grown inveterate. Presume not to wrestle it out by delay; those hopes too often are vain; and such as thus think to prevail, frequently bring themselves to great extremities: Give then the infernal Engineer, no time to form his Fireworks.

When the Distemper has got head, the following Temptations are very usual, either some or all.

1. To think all we have done in Religion, is meer provocation to God, and contributive to the load of his displeasure. This Temptation bore hard upon me, as oft as I reflected on the Woes in Scripture denounced against Hypocrisie. That and Prophanity, if the Hypocrisie be gross, are both alike founded in Infidelity; the one denies God secretly, the other openly; and which is worse, the Day of Judgment will determine. But there is a more refin'd Hypocrisie Men are insensible of in

themselves; a moral sincerity, if I may so call it, in opposition to an Evangelical one; I mean a presumptive one, not gracious and saving: The Cries of meer Nature are better than none, much more the Voice of common Grace; a Man with the Means might have done better, but if he did something, 'tis better than, by neglect and contempt of God, to refuse all fealty to him: To repent therefore of this, is interpretively to wish, we had openly denounced War against God, and bid defiance to him; so must be a strong Temptation.

u 2. To suppose Prayer useless, and God inexorable. This cuts off all intercourse with Heaven, while it prevails, and stops the very breath of the spiritual Life in the Soul. Expect him to ply this Oar with diligence; as well knowing of what consequence it is, to the Success of his cruel Design. Break thro' it then with a holy violence, and gallantry of obstinate Resolution as for your Life, maugre all opposition: Pray as you can, tho' in the most broken Language; God will understand and accept the desires of your Heart, the best part of Prayer; nay of a sigh express'd that you can't do better; tho' you chatter as a Crane, with *Hezekiah*, it will not fail of acceptance: The sense of your unworthiness, will promote your Humility; and difficulty, will render the Attempt more pleasing; and what's more grateful to him than such a disposition?

Blessed

Blessed be God, Satan did not prevail in this Point, till I came to the last extremity.

3. To cast off the Yoke of God, and turn Libertine, and bid adieu to all hope of Heaven. This is all over Devillism, and bears the truest Print of the Cloven-Foot. He thus far prevail'd with me, so as to wish I might have some ease here, and get from under the Power of God's Wrath, whatever became of me hereafter. A cursed Wish, I have often pray'd backward, and beg most heartily God would ne'er lay it to my Charge, : And now say with that holy Man; *Hic ure, hic seca, domine, modo parcas in Eternum.*

4. If none of these fasten; his last and strongest, is to make away your self, and hide your Head and Troubles in the Dust, This is a Plot against your Soul and Body, to get immediate possession to Torment: And as this Design most comports with his bloody purpose, who is skilful to destroy, so expect, when occasion serves, he'll urge this with greatest violence. Know that this is Murther of the worst sort, admit not then a thought about it; reject his first suggestion with abhorrence; if you parley, he'll take it for a degree of compliance; 'twill flush him with hope, and make him redouble the Assault to your greater Terror or Destruction: Remember God stands by to observe you; to be your Second if you'll but Fight; and if you are so dispos'd in earnest, shew it by giving no advantage to the Enemy;

but immediately resist the first Onset. If you enter into debate, 'tis a degree of assent, a turning the back in Fight; then Woe betide you if God turn from you and desert you, as you do his Cause and your own. Call in help; and 'twill discourage him and abate the force of the Temptation.

I knew one who took this Advice, and thereby, thro' God's assistance, escaped the snare, when all was ready for execution. This sore and dreadful Temptation, thro' the unparallell'd compassion of my Blessed Master, was never in the least degree mine; an instance ne'er enough to be admir'd of the amazing goodness of God, considering the length of my Distress: But by what I felt of Satan's Power in other Temptations, I can easily guess at the strength of this. And I wish I had the Skill and Might of a Seraphim, to Sing his Praise for so great a Deliverance; and let the pious Reader say, *Amen.*

5. There is one more I might mention, as cautionary to some, which gall'd me extreamly; 'tis this: When I thought of our Saviour's Woe denounced against such as offend any of his little ones; it had more than the weight of a Mill-Stone to sink me deeper in the Sea of Despair. O what stinging thoughts did the apprehension of seducing any of God's Children create in my Breast! 'Twas like fresh Fuel to the devouring Flames of Conscience. Let such consider it well, as boldly partake in others Mens Sins, with-

out Caution or Remorse; who, as if they were in strict League with Hell, approve themselves tempting Imps, and Factors to the Devil; as if they coveted a double Damnation. How glad are some if they can Profelyte any to Wickedness, and List them in the Devil's Service? Little do such consider how they heap Coals of Fire on their own Heads; when they draw a good Man into Sin, it pleases them best, tho' 'twill one day cost them dearest; which shews plainly what Spirit acts them; that they are of their Father the Devil, and will do his drudgery. I know it is very incidental to corrupt Nature, to affect Brethren in Iniquity and Suffering, if it must be; but such will certainly find the contrary effect in Hell; not one jot of Ease, but infinitely more Torment.

To my shame let it be express'd; that this bedlam thought once boy'd me up in my wandrings, viz. That I was not so bad as others; that if I went to Hell, such and such would; forgetting all this while, that my place might be hotter than theirs, as sinning against more Light and Means; and that it was more like a Fiend, than a Man or a Christian, to take any comfort in a Partnership of Misery; As many Faggots make the Fire burn the fiercer, so the damned enrage one anothers Miseries, and make the burning Tophet the more intolerable. Lord lay not this Sin to my Charge, but accept my Confession for Christ sake. *Amen.*

Let none from their Innocency, or Constitution, presume of an indemnity from attacks of this nature: When the Trial comes, the best find matter for an accusing Conscience; and Jolly, Sanguine Temperaments have been arrested: Prepare then for what may be in your golden Seasons; and to this end, learn to handle your Spiritual Weapons: lay in a stock of knowledge from Scripture, the great Armory; and peruse other serious Books on the same Subject.

Aiery, vegete Tempers have been terribly accosted and quite perverted; let none then pretend exemption. Guilt makes many cry out of the Spleen, who are naturally antipodes to it, in their temperament: The Hippo is a fashionable Term of Art, and the pretence to it is often a sculking hole to conceal horrors of Conscience. Some in a serious mood, I have known to acknowledge it for themselves and their fraternity.

To such as are under the power of despondent thoughts, I'd recommend the reading the two Books express'd in the Margin. Among the many Treatises on that Subject, I found none gave that stay to my Spirit, that they sometimes did; they being excellently contrived to suit the worst cases supposeable: a sure method to prepare a Plaster as broad as the Sore: For it seems a Symptom essential

*A Child of
Light walk-
ing in Dark-
ness. By Goodwin.
Gods thoughts
and ways a-
bove ours, &c.
By Shower.*

* A Discourse to the Distemper, to suppose the worst of Trouble of that's possible. There's * another lately Printed, of great use before, in, and after
*Mind. By Howe.
Roger's.*

ter these circumstances, which I read with great satisfaction. It describes very truly the Treatment requisite for Persons in such cases, justly censuring severe and rigid Management; in which the Author's and my own Experience, heartily concur: There are many very useful things in it.

Charity, we are told, is the bond of perfectness, and that without it all our Profession is nothing: But there seems too little of it among such as can't bear with little differences without an open Rupture. 'Tis no doubt a grateful Spectacle to the common Enemy, to see Men oppose one another, or refuse mutual Assistance; but I hope I need not persuade any under the Calamity I'm discoursing of, to try any useful helps that may come from the hands of Persons of a different Persuasion: I suppose the Man upon the Rack will kiss the officious Hand that will take him down, and ne'er stand upon niceties.

“ **O** Lord, who hast taught us that all
 “ our doings without Charity are
 “ nothing worth; Send thy holy Ghost, and
 “ pour into our Hearts that most excellent
 “ Gift of Charity, the very bond of
 “ Peace and of all Vertues, without
 “ which whosoever liveth is counted
 “ dead before thee. Grant this for thine
 “ only Son Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

To supply the brevity of the Reflections, I think fit to subjoin something by way of Objection and Answer; to anticipate, if possible,

possible, those of the Reader. I only premise this. That I suppose my self debating with such as own they have Immortal Souls, the Being and Operations of Spirits; for it's not a Place to dispute these Principles.

Object. I.

You gave Instances of idle Fears and Whimsies, in the First part; which are known to be the natural effects of meer Melancholy, as Heat is of Fire, or a Phrensie of a Fever; and what you make so much of in the Second, seems but a more confirm'd State of the same Distemper; and yet you attribute all to Supernatural Causes. This is the way to confound things; to bring the Devil into every thing, to nullifie second causes and effects; to confirm Scepticks, the Devil is nothing but a mad Fancy that brings him into every thing.

Ans. I.

Mens Opinions alter not the Properties of things; they are what they really are, let Men think as they please. If ascribing too much to Supernatural Agents has this tendency, will ascribing too little mend the matter? or forbearance make such Men better? Suppose weak Arguments of this kind to have done some injury, have solutions attempted solely by Mechanical Causes done less? I see no necessity of either extream, and as a Friend to Truth, would avoid both. What Fancy and Fear can effect, in producing Distempers and even Death, is notorious. Mr. Boyle gives an instance of a Captain, whose Hair turn'd Grey in a Night, from strong

*Exp. crim.
Philos.*

strong apprehensions of Execution next Morning. If the violent Emotions of natural Powers of the Mind, or corporeal Faculties, can thus alter or over-set Nature; what Christian dare wholly seclude or nicely determine the agency of invisible Powers, in mixing their Impresses with such natural movements, or mimicking them from beginning to end, thro' the whole Process of any such Operation?

Dæmones morbos ut plurimum inferunt Melancholicos: & p. 332. Insinuunt se nonnunquam corporibus hominum, & occulte in visceribus operi, valetudinem vitiant, mentes furoribus quatunt. Hor. subsc. p. 6. cent. prim. Came-
rar.

The Case of *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Job*, and *Herod*, the Scriptures make singular, had ne'er been reputed so, but for their Testimony: Boils and Worms are the issues of natural Diseases; and Melancholy may bebrute a Man; change his way of Life and Manners, even into a bestial degeneracy. Storms blow down Houses; and Lightning consumes Man and Beast naturally; and Robbers as freely fall upon their Prey; and yet we are expressly told, these were Judgments inflicted by invisible Agents, the rest at their instigation. The Pestilence springs from natural Causes, yet is called *plaga Dei*, and is often in Scripture said to be the effect of his immediate Hand. That the Devil could impress the Elements and temperament of the Body is plain: And tho' he be much restrain'd since the times of the Gospel; yet we find some since under Excommunication, given over to Satan for destruction of the
Flesh;

Flesh: And we have no reason to suppose that effect now ceased, where it's duly perform'd. I little thought of Temptation, till extremities convinc'd me, and the circumstances of my Recovery, to which I refer the judicious; that, and what I said before, I hope sufficiently obviate the Objection.

Object. II. Opiates, you grant, reliev'd you; want of regular management distress'd you; that you was seiz'd with great disorders in the midst of your Journey, tho' you set out calm: Are not these the genuine effects of Matter and Motion? When the Blood and Spirits are low, and Fancy active, usually People have strange apprehensions of themselves and things. Long or violent Exercise exhausts the Spirits, especially after disuse and weakness of Body: And all these circumstances concurring in your Case, 'tis evident you can't easily get clear of the force of the Argument.

Ans. w.

I confess it harder to convince others than my self, since I can't apprise them of some Particularities and Sensations I'm conscious of; nor can I cloath the words I express matters by with that energy and feeling sense the things themselves were convey'd to me; so must acquiesce in the various opinions that are like to pass, according to Mens different Principles and Sentiments. I acknowledge the Allegations to be just in many cases, but not mine, which I know to be uncommon. I own we are all too indulgent of our selves, and easily grow opini-
ative

ative of what we do or suffer: Self-love blinds us, inspiring us with partiality, and over-weaning imaginations, which render it a usual attempt to set up for singularity: And I wish we cou'd all more dethrone that Idol. If what I say prove not convictive, upon a just remonstrance, were I in a capacity, all I saw reasonable should be retracted. Let such modest suppositions then some way atone for my adherence to Convictions, when I appear peremptory; for as I ought certainly to obey them, so I here once for all solemnly declare, I follow them. I refer the Reader to what I said on this Topick in the Reflections. All I think needful to add, is, that as I accounted there for the use of Opiates, if the Argument hold, it does for management, and all &c's of that nature. I touch'd there also on Exercise, and what probably might be the effect of it in my case. I'll back all with the following Considerations. The Ancients speak mighty things of the power of Musick to cure many Diseases and Passions both of Body and Mind. The *Thebans* cur'd Distempers by the use of the Pipe. *A. Gell.* says, it cures the Sciatica, and *Galen* calls it *καταυλεῖν τῷ πᾶσι*, *loca dolentia decantare.* *Picus Mirand.* says, Musick moves the Spirits to act upon the Soul, as Medicaments do to operate upon the Body; and it cures the Body by the Soul, as Physick does the Soul by the Body. Physicians apply Remedies to Patients under trouble of Conscience, and in cases of supposed Possessi-

on or Witchcraft; tho' some look no farther than the meer disorders of Nature, yet many practise on other grounds, as believing such things, and the Soul to be immaterial. *Baglivi* in his Dissertation of the *Tarantula*, gives us curious Observations about the Musical Cure of the Bite of it. We find of what efficacy the Harp was in driving the Evil Spirit away from *Saul*: nay, of what use Musick was to such as were inspired by the Spirit of God, ap-

2 King. 3. 15. pears by *Elisha*; when the Minstrel play'd, the hand of the Lord came upon him. *St. Matt.* makes the Lunatick and the Possess'd the same, Chap. 17. yet seems to distinguish them, Chap. 4. 24. The Learned *Camero* reconciles it thus: *Luna non agit ita in corpora, ut hoc aut illud effectum consequatur, nisi quia jam corpus sic affectum est, ut luna hoc vel illud efficiat; cum ergo diabolus ita afficit corpus, ut reddat illud tali lune operationi obnoxium, idem est,** *Δαιμονισδυνσθ & σελωιαλδυνσθ*, Lunaticus & Arreptitius. Quod demones id possint facere ex eo patet, quod quæ demon facit in corporibus nostris interdum sint ejusmodi, ut remediis quibus corpus efficitur, minui possint: nam ita clarum fit demonem sic agere ut immutet duntaxat temperamentum corporis.

Vid. pl. in
Prælect. ad
Mat.

* Demone agit at us.

These things laid together, and duly considered, I hope what I have advanced about Opiates, &c. may not appear preposterous, supposing something more than meer Nature concern'd.

The remaining part of the Objection appertaining chiefly to matter of fact, I declare it to be this. Riding I was habituated

bituated to all my Life: and tho' Nature
 was much lower now than ordinary, thro'
 Terrors and want of the regular refresh-
 ments of Sleep and Diet, yet upon every
 considerable relaxation, I found my Mind
 as clear as ever, and my Body able to bear
 the fatigue of a moderate Journey, being
 naturally of a robust Constitution. In
 short, I felt little lassitude, scarce so much
 as was usual, and my Thoughts, call them
 Fancy, Invention, or what you please,
 were employ'd mostly how to make my
 Peace with God, till Terrors broke in
 upon me. That Stay given my Spirit, I
 mention'd, as sensibly and remarkably
 withdrew as it was given; which none
 can judge of, as I that felt it, which I
 relate with faithfulness; and if my word
 can't be relied on, 'tis in vain to argue
 the Point farther. I was under no intoxi-
 cations from Narcoticks, or that lowness of
 Spirits, which fills some with idle Fan-
 sies, and waking Dreams; like the fearful *Bur-*
gundians *Phil. de Comines* speaks of, who *Book 1. Ch.*
 mistaking Thistles for Lances, were struck *11.*
 with the Panick. I dwell the longer on
 this Subject the Objection being so mate-
 rial. I conclude with an expression out of
Camero. Pomponatius non recte conclusit Præl. p. 55.
nullam esse Demonis efficaciam, quod vidisset
multorum morbos, qui videbantur esse à Demo-
ne, levatos curatione medicâ: nam cum Diabo-
lus agat in corpora nostra pro ratione tempe-
ramenti, & constitutionis, effecta ejus possunt
minui, & augeri, prout alteratur temperamen-
tum.

Object. III. You pretend to give us two peculiar Instances of strange wrathful impressions, as you suppose more immediately from God; and yet tell us, you made no Reflexions at that time. 'Tis scarce possible to conceive of any thing without some kind of Reflexion, especially on so awful an occasion: But not to lie at the ketch for an unwary expression, may not all this be solv'd by the Laws of Mechanism? Must we run to the World of Spirits for solutions for every surprizing act of Nature? These are rather the Pleas of Laziness and Superstition, than the effects of Industry and sound Knowledge; an easy way to account for every thing. When the Spirits in the Brain have been long agitated by intense thinking Night and Day, they must needs disorder the other fluids of the Body, breed a Stagnation and Indigestion, which encreases the viscid acidity of the Blood, so renders the Distemper more inveterate; till possibly the Spirits get a pungency, like *Aqua Fortis*. Add to this, the Spasms of the *Fibrille* of the Brain, and the disorders of the Animal Spirits (if *Neotericks* will allow the Phrase) productive of irregular Motions, forcing them into new Tracks, together with the unusual impressions of the long use of Opiates. I demand now, whether this and much more that might be urg'd to the same purpose, is not sufficient to solve the present Phainomena?

I hope

I hope the demand is no less precarious. Answ.
 ous, to suppose there is such a thing to be
 felt as the Wrath of God in this World.
 I ask then, how any under the inflictions
 of this Wrath, who desired to express a
 sense of it, should accommodate himself to
 the capacities of such as ne'er felt it, so
 as to obtain credit, and leave no grounds
 of Exception? Words afford but feeble
 Ideas of things, that fall not under the
 Senses; what a vastly different sense has
 he of the Gout or Stone that has felt a
 Paroxysm from him that has only receiv'd
 the liveliest descriptions of them? *I have heard*
of thee by the hearing of the Ear, says Job
to God, but now I see thee, I abhor myself
in dust and ashes. The terrors of an an-
 gry God are most emphatically describ'd
 in Scripture: But, O what an unconceiv-
 able difference is there, when he glares
 upon us with some real Rays of his dis-
 pleasure! how overwhelming and astonish-
 ing are they? Who can see him and live,
 or feel his anger and support themselves,
 unless he under-prop the Soul, by putting
 underneath his everlasting Arm? How
 many that ne'er felt the misery of the
 Spleen, laugh at others under the extre-
 mities of it, as the silly thing call'd Va-
 pors, the meer product of an idle Fancy?
 Yet it is as real a Disease as a Fever, and
 often eats out the comfort of the Patient's
 Life: And did these Sanguine Gentlemen
 know the terror of the encounter, they'd
 be fuller of Pity than Censure. Many make
 a jest of the Wrath to come, that must feel

it in good earnest for ever: And some, that I hope ne'er will tast it, believe it so much to come, as if no drops of it fell in time: As if they more consulted *Hippocrates*, or *Des Cartes*, than Casuists, Commentators, Histories, or even the Book of God it self. What hopeful encouragements have I then for what I offer? My only comfort is, tho' I miss my aim, I hope I shall not lose my labour, while there is a God above that measures us more by the desires of our Hearts, than the Success of our Enterprizes: The former is our proper Province, the latter his sole Pre-rogative.

As to my meaning, when I say I had no Reflexions, 'tis obvious, viz. that I had no previous or concomitant ones, that might be thought to produce so strange an effect: Some I must have: What I had before I signify'd; and what I had at the time, God knows they were past expression sad. As to the remains of the Objection; 'tis the usual harangue on these Topicks, which is endless pro and con; and when all is said, it's easily evaded by a ready Wit and volatile Fancy: Physick and Philosophy are much in the dark, as well as some things in Divinity, especially these abstruse Points about Temptation: I therefore supersede it here, as having touch'd upon the most material part of it, and refer it to the candid and judicious to reconcile fairly, if they can, some Passages meerly to such Principles; tho' I deny

deny not the Objection to have its weight in some cases.

I find you dubious about the origin of Object. IV. those two strange impressions just mention'd, whether from God or Satan. Not that I find fault with modesty so express'd; since 'twould look like a daring piece of Folly to pretend to determine it, supposing they were really supernatural: But I observe one that came to you in your distress, declin'd Praying with you, tho' you entreated him. Now what cou'd make a Man you express so favourable an opinion of, refuse such an act of Charity, but that he thought you almost or quite distracted, and then your case is plain? for had he thought you your self, tho' in ill-hands, the Obligation redoubled upon him to comply. And is not Bleeding another indication you was too much transported?

Had you quarrell'd with me for indetermin- Answ.
nation in so nice a point; I shou'd think you in the same circumstances you suppose I was: But since you talk rationally, I'll give you as candid a reply, and all the satisfaction the case will bear, where another's sentiments are concern'd as well as my own. The indications you lay so great a stress upon, are plausible, but by no means conclusive, unless you cou'd be sure, there was no other reason to determine the non-compliance of the Party; a conclusion I suppose you will not stand by. And to shew you there was, I'll produce one, I verily believe to be the true

one, if behaviour and expressions may pass for the best Index of the Mind; which was this: He told me the Blasphemous expressions were not mine; and appear'd strangely affected with my State, even to trembling; seeming absolutely to despair of me upon all considerations, tho' I gave proofs to all about me, that I was perfectly my self at that time. I pretend not to vindicate his refusal, being in Orders, which makes it appear more gross, tho' I have apologiz'd for it. As for Bleeding, I suppose the Physician took his indications from the acrimony of the Blood, which he hop'd to rectifie, by taking some of it away. Violent Symptoms of this kind, appear'd from the excoriation of some parts of the Body; and he seconded his Endeavours by proper Alteratives. So far was I from extravagant Motions that might suggest the necessity of such an Operation, that I lay sottish and stupid: And if he had an Eye more immediately to the Circulation of the Blood, it seems more natural to suppose he aim'd at quickning rather than repressing it.

Object. V.

Strange Gestures and blasphemous Expressions, you intimate as the winding up as it were of this dreadful Tragedy: Here your Argument seems to come to a head, and you lay much stress upon it, supposing it must be conclusive to the World, that there are such things as Evil Spirits, whose Malice and Power is extremely formidable. But alas you forget your Senses are as subject to fallacy and delusions

of

of this kind, as your inward Sensations of something extraordinary were before. Don't *Burton* and many other Authors, that Write of Melancholy, give you strange Precedents of the Strength of Imagination, as to what Men thought themselves to see, and feel, to be, and do? In short, you're obnoxious in this Point, to all the Cavils aforesaid.

What you say of that Author's relation, is as true as what he says of the Power of Devils to cause Diseases; where he expresses Mens forwardness to laugh at and despise all accounts of their Beings and Operations, tho' ne'er so solemnly attested, asserting at the same time, that they can work upon Body and Mind from Experience. And I think it an irrefragable Argument that Devils not only can do so, but that they usually work according to the disposition of the Body; because where Melancholy is natural and hereditary, Persons are found obnoxious to most violent Temptations; and if so, 'tis clear of what use Physical means are in such Cases. To confound Temptation now with meer sadness of Spirit, and its dreadful effects with those of meer Mechanical Principles, is to talk like *Aristotle*, more than *St. Paul*, and translate the Christian dialect into Heathen gibberish. I own Devils can pervert nature by Permission without the least natural preindispositions, so can superinduce the deepest Melancholy on the most florid Sanguine Temper; but

Answe:

Burt. Mel.
p. 39. ad fin.

we must not make extraordinary Cases the standard of his Commission. This by the by, I reply now more directly.

Those things are as strange as true, and I confess I lay much stress upon them, and hope they'll affect me as long as I live; but as to convincing the World, I have little expectation, but rather seek to discharge my Conscience, and express my gratitude to my great Benefactor. I'm too sensible of the scurvy treatment things of this nature meet with from the World, to promise my self a better fate. I own what Authors say to be true, as to what you Object; and Arguments founded on those Observations to be very specious, but see nothing in them really to enervate what I drive at. I'll endeavour to make good this assertion by a familiar Instance. Remember you are or ought to be a Christian, as I premis'd at first, and consequently believe the existence of Spirits. Many have pretended to see and converse with Angels, Dæmons, or departed Souls; and no doubt some have. But 'tis as true, many more have only pretended, and been under strong delusion: Guilt, Fear, Fancy, has made them believe strange things, notoriously false. Now supposing all this to be matter of fact, I demand how he that really converses with such things, and has the fullest proof to himself that he does so, which the nature of the thing admits of, can get rid of the charge of Imposture? Meer pretenders will be as positive and punctual as he, and as solemn in their
 asseverati-

asseverations, and for that reason the World will treat him as rigorously. If he be a Man of Parts and Learning, fam'd for Wisdom, then he's suspected as a cunning designing Fellow. If his Character run for Piety, that wont secure him: If they allow him to be honest, then they'll say he is timorous, weak, and credulous; but were he wise and couragious, and much more, by one means or another they'll be sure to shift off the evidence. Must now this Man forego the evidence of his Senses, and believe himself a Fool or Mad-Man, because wise Men think him so? or his Visions to be nothing but the Projection of Shadows animated by a roving Fancy, the meer effect of Moon-shine or Candle-light, assisted by a disordered Brain? Will Gibes and Drollery, Scoffs and Jeers, fine Sayings and subtile Arguments, persuade him he slept or dream'd, or is a Lunatick? Will he not scorn the Imposition, and know you to be in this matter, what you think and miscall him? What answers this, does the Objection, which you may apply at your leisure, and what you in short say, lies open to all Cavil; I retort, by affirming what's said here and before, concludes as strongly against all objections of this nature.

What makes Men better satisfi'd with the testimony of their own Senses, than with that of a Hundred as well quallifi'd Persons, but Self-love and Opinion? And what makes some readily believe the Being, Customs, Manners and Dispositions of

Countries they never saw, upon the Report of others; and yet reject all relations of invisible Agents, tho' ne'er so well attested? What can be the Cause, but the degeneracy of their Nature and Principles, which makes them secretly wish, and desire there were no such things? Reason tells us, the testimony of many can't be so liable to imposture, as that of one: And that the testimony of honest Men, is as valid in one Case as another, tho' Knaves abuse every thing. In this matter the Men of Sense oppose the dictate of their avowed Oracle, while they cry, great is *Diana*, and Sacrifice to her Shrine; tho' *Dagon*-like, she tumble down before the Ark of God, yet they gather up the crippled members of the Idol, and reinstal her with double veneration.

Some have conceited their Bodies were Glass, and that every one that came near them would break them: Others, that they cou'd not move, or were too big to pass a Door, till frights made them find their heels. Many Instances might be given of these fanciful apprehensions, and other Melancholy Cases. But I'd hope enough has been said to prove mine was more than the heavings of the Hypochondres: But cou'd that imputation be fairly fasten'd upon me, yet the Man that should compare the extremities I was under, to these fanciful cases, I shou'd ne'er think him worthy of an answer. He that should tell me, the Pain of a Prick with a Pin, was as bad as that of the Rack or Wheel,
I'd

I'd repute him of kin to a Proud Senseless Stoick, whose pretence to more Wit than his Neighbours, has devour'd his common Sense ; for to deny degrees of Pain is as ridiculous, as to say there's none. In the *Ephialtes* or Night-Mare, the Patient thinks his Breast oppress'd with heavy weights; in *Rheumatic* Pains, the Parts to be gnaw'd as it were with Dogs; in extremities of the *Head-ach*, his Head to cleave as it were in pieces; yet every one knows these are but the dictates of Fancy, as to the formality of the conceptions; but I hope the Pains and Oppression are real, and any that shou'd upbraid one under their Power, as fanciful, wou'd meet with but course usage from him. Grant then that but to be real, which I declare was more terrible than ever I felt any thing either from Mind or Body, and we'll quarrel no more about Modes and Formalities. You tell me my Senses are subject to fallacy; but how can you who are eaten up of Sense, and believe little but what your own Eyes or Ears convince you of, with what brow dare you question the Senses? What? did you mean your own? Is it the little dear thing call'd Self you mean all this time? Have you the monopoly of true Sense? And is infallibility part of your Birth right, and fallacy the natural inheritance of all other dull Mortals?

How cou'd you remember these Passa-Object. VI.
ges so distinctly, while under such an impetus of horrors and consternation, during the time of transaction?

God

Answ.

God gave me a Presence of Mind, and for ought I know, with a design to enable me to perform what I have here attempted. I had intervals for recollection; and I hope, I need not take pains to persuade you, matters that came with that force, and so neerly concern'd me, employ'd my Thoughts constantly, and stuck close to me. And the very worst I wish you is, that you may ne'er have such feeling reasons, and costly occasions of remembrance, nor know the Terror of such Impressions. None know the effects of the anger of Heaven, but such as feel them.

Psal. 90.

One Frown from God, will be found more dreadful than the displeasure of the whole World: Wo be to him that has to deal with Omnipotency provok'd! *According to his Fear, so is his Wrath.* If he once take you in hand, you'll soon know who you have to do with; your dear-bought Experience, will be instead of all Arguments to convince you there's something very distinguishing in that treatment from all that ever you felt. Believe it, the Flames will be more tolerable to your Body, than that anguish will be to your Mind, when the Poison of his Arrows drinks up your Spirit. Summon the Sons of Art about you: Get the Tongue of the Learned, and the Assistants of Nature: Try the force of Reason, Distinctions, and grave Suppositions. Observe if such as would joke or argue you into supposals, that you are only under bodily Distemper, don't

don't out of measure exasperate you. I knew an attempt of this nature made by a jolly Crew, but the Party treated them with such a Mein and Expressions, as struck terror into the Center of their Souls, and forc'd them to quit the Room. If you think there's any truth in this, be not now then too opiniative of your Objections, lest you befool your self as much if it shou'd e're be your own Case.

Men of Parts and Learning will say you are an Enthusiastick Visionary ; that your Cant appears in laying such a stress upon the impression of the two Sermons you heard in your Agonies. You was no proper judge of a Sermon then: You intimate the mean opinion you had of the Preacher, and his indifferent Performances, and yet tell us it extraordinarily affected you. Would not the meanest Discourse have produced the same effect at such a juncture ? The fearful start at their own Shadow, the shaking of a Leaf, the whistling of the Wind. How easily might you construe the Voice of a Man, at such a season, as God's thunder from Heaven ? and mistake a serious Exhortation falling in with your fears, for Divine impressions?

Parts, &c. without Piety are like a Sword in a Mad-man's hand, to do the more mischief. Serious Discourse without more a-do passes for Cant with too many ; the mentioning the Influences of the Spirit of God, they term Enthusiasm ; and a strict Life, they call refin'd Hypocrisie ; tho' the Divine

Ans.

* Ἀκριβῶς
a word some
have made

the subject of one Sermon? Or did the Power of his
their Raillery, Preaching consist in the demonstration of
tho' us'd by the Spirit? That our Faith should not stand
the H. Gh. in the Wisdom of Men, but in the Power of
1 Cor. 2. 4, God. Did the shaking of the Prison, or
5.

St. Paul's Eloquence, convert the Jailor?
Or did the Spirit of Christ reveal him?
What cou'd an Earth-quake effect, but
what it does usually, fright and terrifie,
without the still Voice within? Has not
God put this Treasure in Earthen Vessels,
that the excellency of the Power may be of
2 Cor. 4. 7. God, and not of us? Have we no Instances
in our Days of the mighty Success of
weak Instruments, while great ones have
effected far less? Why shou'd we so over-
rate the Opinion of those, the Holy-Ghost
villifies so much in the Three first Chap-
ters of the first Epistle to the Corinthians?
'Tis a Plea we know as old as Scribes
and Pharisees, and just of the same force
now, it was then; viz. Have any of the Ru-

John 7. 48, lers, or of the Pharisees, believed on him? But
49. this People who know not the Law are cur-
sed; tho the Officers represented our Lord
speaking as never Man spake. v. 46. 'Tis
easy for some of the worst of Men, to tra-
duce some of the best, as a Mob of Igno-
ramuses, and they ne'er want a wild Par-
ty to second them, who are more easily
impress'd with Confidence than Truth. I

heard

heard excellent Sermons before these Impressions, and have since, under great Terrors, without any such effect: And you must pardon me, if I say, I'm the best judge of my own perceptions and sensations. " No Man, says a Learned Gentle- *Dr. Grew of*

" man, can be a proper judge of an others *Univerf. p.*

" Actions, that omits any one circum- 49.

" stance relating to them. An exact judg-

" ment, being so far like a Mathematic

" demonstration. The making whereof,

" may possibly depend upon Twenty Pro-

" positions to be predemonstrated; the o-

" mitting of any one of which will make

" the whole Operation to be foolish. If

this be so as to outward Actions, what

guess can be made of inward Sensations?

If Men will not take a true representati-

on of what passes between God and the

Soul upon trust, they must confine their

knowledge to their own Experience. As

for that part of the Argument that con-

cerns a timorous Temper, it was not my

case from Nature or Disease, so deserves

no farther answer. " When God gives *Bp. Sander-*

" strength to his Word in the Mouth of *son, p. 170,*

" but weak Instruments, it pierces into *and 183.*

" the Consciences of obstinate Sinners,

" and brings the Proudest of them upon

" their Knees in despite of their Hearts.

" *Felix* trembled at it, *Ahab* was humbled

" by it; the one an Atheist, the other a

" Hypocrite: Thou art worse than either,

" if it work not at least as much upon

" thee.

But

Object.
VIII.

But to what purpose do you broach these things to the World? there's enough of this nature upon record already, in much plainer Cases; whereas yours seems to be more intricate and dubious. What's divulg'd satisfies good Men; above all the Word of God; and there's more virtue in believing and acting accordingly, than in hankering after sensible appearances. Men that have no Faith, are most craving after Arguments from Sense, which curiosity and a sensual genius prompt them to, which your Case will by no means satisfy. The Deist and Sceptick complain they are surfeited with these things, and make them frequently the Subject of their Merriment; you do but provoke their grin, and get a liberal share in their disdainful pity.

Ans^r.

'Tis, I hope, neither the Fear or Favour of Men that excite me to this attempt; I desire pure sense of Duty, Love and Loyalty to my Blessed Master, in quest of his Glory, shou'd animate every tittle of this poor Performance. As for the Taunts of the Men you mention, if you knew how little I valued them, you would not lay the weight of a Feather upon the Argument: And for their haughty Pity, wou'd they be persuaded to keep it a little by them, the Day is coming, they may find little enough for themselves. I scorn and despise both their Pity and their Censure, and wou'd no more attempt to compound with them for Mercy, than with their black Master. Had your Advice been taken a few Ages past, you'd have had much less

to

to brag of; and all Wise Men wou'd have detested your Counsells. If I throw my Mite into the Treasury of the Temple, with a Talent of Affection, shall Love be rejected, because ability fails? While the Wisdom of Providence calls for Observation and Improvement, shall we non-attend, or conceal what might profit others, and advance his Honor, from a plenitude of our own Conceits? Arguments from the Senses, we know wont alone convert Men; but if God sometimes condescends to our weakness, and affords them, shall we ungratefully reject them? or in a profound pang of affected modesty suppress them? Tho' some have less need of these helps than others, does it follow the strongest Faith has none? And are there not bruised Reeds to be taken care of, as well as goodly Cedars? That contrivance must needs be wondrous, that opposes the Wisdom of Providence. When God animadverts upon any, he requires all to mind and improve the Discipline: to refuse it, is at their Peril. And what if God by such Instances as these at second hand, resolve to leave some Men inexcusable, who are so full of sensible demands, and bold challenges, who call living by Faith, Fancy; and dependance on God, Presumption?

But methinks you very incautiously expose your Character: Wou'd you have the World think you were Possess'd, when you spoke Blasphemy in a raving Fit? What else can you drive at? And if so, they'll judge

judge very hard of you, and think you a Person little to be credited in any thing, much less upon so important a Subject. Some think Dæmoniacks of Old, were but Diseased Persons; and some that think otherwise, yet deny any such thing as Possession now a Days; but were both allow'd, they must sure be very wicked whom God thus abandons and leaves so much to the Power of Satan.

Ans.

If I say any thing to take off the edge of this Argument, I hope it can't fairly be construed as a contrivance to wipe away my own Guilt, and Apologize for my self after such acknowledgements of my unworthiness; no, 'tis my Duty rather to aggravate it: *For he that covereth his Sins shall not Prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have Mercy.* 'Tis not then my present business to dispute what Dæmoniacks were of Old, or whether there be formal Possessions in these latter Ages: Nor think I it my own Case, supposing there were such a thing now. But this I take to be out of dispute; that God now sometimes gives Satan commission to actuate the Tongues of very pious Men, for reasons best known to himself: Witness the desperate expressions of some of them in their Despairing Agonies; utter'd with great reluctancy, at least reflected on with much grief afterwards; many of which are upon record, and too often are still experienced. And this I'm confident was my own Case for several Minutes. 'Tis *Camerarius's* observation; That the Devil affects most to abuse

abuse the Tongue of any Member, because it's the great Instrument of God's glory. It's likely as Mr. Pool observes upon the Place; he spar'd Job's Tongue when he smote him from Head to Foot with Boils, with this malicious intent; that he might more freely Blaspheme God. His Malice is without End or Measure, and greatest against the best: Pirates set not upon empty Bottoms, but the richest Cargoes. *In illos potissimum invadit Diabolus. qui Athletæ Dei & averso à suo regno, quos totâ armaturâ suâ, & omni µθοδεσά τῆς πλάνης aggriditur, de reliquis non laborat, qui jam ipsi obnoxii.* Luther complains he set upon him with incredible contrivances, as if he had been the only Man he sought to destroy. And we know not how far our Blessed Lord consulted our comfort in this kind, while he suffered his holy Body to be handled by Satan, when he waisted him to the Pinnacle of the Temple; provided we maintain our hatred and opposition of him. *Dæ-Camerô Prælo- mones piis presertim instant, atq; imminent, quo p. 56.* ne nos terremur, voluit etiam Christus corpus suum obnoxium esse Satana ad tempus. Let all whose fate it may prove to fall more or less under Satan's Power involuntarily, encourage themselves by these considerations. No doubt instances might be given, tho' very rare, of Possessions in our Days, tho' the genius of some Men disposes them fiercely to oppose the very supposition: the Faction has nothing to support its Cause from Scripture, but declarations in general of the broken Power of Satan;

Spanh. Dub.
evang. p. 197.
Part 3d.

and who dare pretend to stint it peremptorily, where God has not told us He has? especially in the Face of some astonishing Instances.

Object. X. After all you have said, or can, the Men I mention'd above, won't believe a tittle; they'll laugh at your detesting and conjuring the Devil so formally, while they repute all the effect of a mighty fit of the Spleen: So they will at your Objections and Answers, as Men of Straw of your own rearing, with which you fall gravely to combating. They'll say, you han't given one their true Emphasis, nor really answered what you have been so partial in representing: And therefore, in one word, they'll conclude you are a Romantick second *Spira*, a Fanatick, or a mopish Melancholick, one, or all. I'm really concern'd for you, as one pursuing an honest design with very imprudent managery.

Answ.

The Language you bespeak them in, is as natural as the Foaming of a troubled Sea, or the reeking of a Dunghil in a frosty Morning. Were not the Votaries of Lust and Liberty, sometime agitated by opposition, they would not so easily foam out their own Shame: The Fumes that smother in their Hearts, would not be so visible, were they not condens'd thus, as it were by *Antiperistasis*, if I may presume to use a Term so obsolete: Little Wit, with much ill-nature, will at any time accomplish Satyr and Invective. Did your glorious Master bear the Cross, and despise the shame, and do you pretend to take

it

it up and follow him, and yet stand in awe of a few hard Words? You are too soft sure to be a Christian, who shou'd be a Martyr in Intention: Did you expect the Way to Heaven shou'd be strew'd with Roses, and to meet with no rubs in the narrow Way? To suffer with Christ, is the way to be glorifi'd with him: 'Tis an Honor given to some, not only to believe, but to suffer for him; and this is one way: And would you be exempted from the Lot of special Favourites, not to save your Skin, but only to stop a little stinking Breath? There's a Wo denounc'd against some that Laugh; and who bids fairer for the largest share, than such as make a jest of serious things? And there's another against such as all Men speak well of; who, the better to save themselves, take wondrous care to disoblige no body but their Maker; that tack about to every Wind, rather than they'll endure strefs of Weather; *Loving the Praise of Men, more than the Praise of God.* John 12. 43. Believe it your Honor and Safety, to be scorn'd and traduc'd by some Men. I write not for such as I can't think will afford it a reading, but peep it may be to play the Momus, and turn racking Inquisitors. No, 'tis for their sakes that will be starting Objections; and I'm griev'd to see such a necessity of answering them with so little prospect of Success; which makes me grudge the Minutes I spend upon them, and the room they fill of more useful things, to plain and honest Hearts. So far as my Arguments are

convictive, you are responsible; farther than that, they are none to you, after just trial; and if they prove of no more Life and Strength than Men of Straw; the more easily will the Sons of Wisdom scatter them with a puff of demonstrative Breath. I offend not wilfully in this kind; but if there be a failure, let my Abilities be rather question'd, than my Integrity: For as I had much rather be a Weak Man, than a Wicked one: So I had rather fall under that Character, tho' the World generally steer by the contrary Maxim. Mens Thoughts are no more alike than their Faces; and a ready Wit, and subtile Head may put a Man to a stand that has truth on his side. However I may have fail'd in the manner of Prosecuting the Arguments, I doubt not but the grounds they stand upon, are sufficient to answer other Pleas that might be alledg'd. Were * I mistaken as to what concerns the Reasons of my abjuring the Evil Spirit, yet acting according to full conviction, how should it displease God? Why shou'd it then Man? Let the merry Crew laugh on; 'tis but *Risus Sardonicus*, Convulsions before Death. Should these Men you are so afraid of, chance to turn Textuaries, and write Marginal Notes on St. Paul's Vision, or his Rapture, *whether in the Body, or out of it, God knows*; what think you would be the Comment? When our Lord himself was laugh'd to scorn, and treated as the vilest Impostor; his Apostles ridicul'd as Men full of New-Wine, or Mad; what private Christian,

* Tho' no
Man's Error
commends
him unto God,
yet his carriage
under an
Error may.
Dr. *Evans*
Vol. I. p. 78.

Christian, in the discharge of his Duty, can hope for better quarter, while the same Seed of the Serpent so abounds? But the Day, blessed be God, is coming, which will set all to rights; when sly Hypocrisie shall be detected, and no room left for subterfuge and evasion, for Craft and Policy; when all sturdy confidence that braves it with bold challenges, and bids defiance to every thing, shall drop at once, and sneak for ever. To this I appeal, where it shall perfectly be known, who were the Deceivers, and who the Deceived; where I'm persuaded we shall meet in better Temper, and to fuller satisfaction: Till then farewell.

I might have added some more Passages of moment, but the World will not bear them, neither indeed can I express them to full Advantage. Let us use our Reason, but not Idolize it; nor pretend boldly to determine what God can, or does in the World; or confine his Providence to ordinary Methods; or the powers of the invisible World, and their ways of operation, by the Measures of our narrow Capacities. Reason's a Ray from Heaven, design'd to lead us thither; 'twas once in Perfection, and in our own keeping: 'Twas given us then, not to be knowing as God, but to keep us in an humble dependance upon him, our Perfection and Safety. Pride and Affectation was our first undoing: The ill-husbandry of our first Parents, has reduc'd our Reason to the State of a Candle ~~set~~ ^{put} into the Socket, that casts a faint

glimmering Light : But Light is Light still, tho' in a dark Lanthorn. He that despises it, forgets it's a Divine and Noble Gift, and is worse than he that puts out his own Eyes : But he that trusts to it unassisted by the Word and Spirit of God, follows an *ignis fatuus*, that will lead him into Bogs and Precipices, but ne'er conduct him to Happiness.

To conclude with something Practical.

In a time of Ease and Serenity, be advis'd to lay the Foundations of your Peace, and hopes of Heaven, upon sure ground, the Scriptures warrant. To that end endeavour,

1. To make thorow Work in the great Business of Conversion ; depend not upon Civility, good Nature, Moral honesty, a Profession, a round of formal Duties, upon any of these separate or all conjunct : Many here fatally mistake and split on these Rocks. No Man it's true can be a Christian without Morality, but meer Morality makes not a Christian ; no not by adding the bare Profession of Christ, without a vital Union with him. Jesus *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, tells us, that *unless we are Born again, we can't see the Kingdom of God* ; which he expounds of being *Born of the Spirit*. The Spirit works Faith, which unites us to Christ our Head, and so we become his living Members, whereby our Souls are animated by his Spirit, as our Bodies are by our Souls ; the manner we know not in either, but by sensible effects discover it in both.

Read Joh. 15.

John 3. 3.

Ver. 5.

both. Thus the Apostle prays they may *be* Ephes. 3.
strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inward 16, 17.

Man: That Christ might dwell in their Hearts by Faith; and so be rooted and grounded in Love. And Colos. 1. 17. *Christ* is said to be in us, *the Hope of Glory.* This seems strange to a Carnal Mind, as well it may, since it can't discern Spiritual things: But a true Believer has as real and refreshing a sense of it sometimes, by those Beams of strength and comfort, radiating his Soul from the Sun of Righteousness, as the Eye and other parts of the Body, have from the natural Sun in the Firmament: And tho' all have not these Influences alike, yet all partake in some degree, so as to be enabled to run their Christian Race: And here lies the Strength and Consolation of the Faithful, in all their pressing difficulties: Grace in the Habit may fail, if not cultivated by the Hand of Heaven; as Rays of Light cut off from the *Focus* of the Sun; but while fed by that inexhaustible source of Light and Heat in the Son of God, *in whom all fulness dwells,* 'twill maintain its Vigor; the Stream will run, as long as the Fountain feeds it. Moral Precepts no doubt have their excellency. But this spark of Faith and Love in the Heart, is the very Soul of them, that transmutes Moral Virtues into Christian Graces. This is the saving Touch from the great Physician, that effectually dries up the unclean Issue of Corruption; a touch like that the Needle has from the Load-stone; that whatever violence pervert its position, yet

remains in a trembling unsettled Posture; till it recover its true standing Point.

Take heed of a half Conversion; when Men begin to see it needful; the next device of Satan is, to get them to take up with the semblance of it, and then he has them faster than before, while they presume and grow secure: He knows how ready our false Hearts are to consent to the Cheat; how backward they are to a painful narrow search: Many for want of carefully traversing the windings of their own Hearts, have stuck in the Birth and miscarried. Read with Care Treatises of Conversion; above all, the holy Word of God, where, as in a Glass, thy Face and State may be seen; and thy Spots wash'd away at the same time, as in a smooth, clear Fountain, even in the Blood of Jesus: get thy blemishes rectifi'd by his Spirit; beg it importunately, promised to such asking; humbly intreat his assistance in Reading, Praying, Meditating, &c. Perform these Exercises with Life; rest not in Formality, but strive to move thy Affections: The Heart naturally hangs off from Meditation, or trifles in it; but rightly follow'd, is of admirable use. In all Confessions of Sin, trace the Fruit to the Root, actual to original Sin: Whatever others prattle; omit no occasion for quickning Humility, as the owning this, eminently affords: Say with the Royal Prophet, *I was conceived in Iniquity, and brought forth in Sin*; in the Front he puts it, while

con-

confessing his great Iniquity, to take the more Shame to himself.

Mistake not legal Terrors for Conversion: They are, it's true, often the Pangs of the New-Birth, but they sometimes go off without a delivery, as do those of the natural; and then all may prove but a Sorrow unto Death, as did that of *Cain* and *Judas*: If Christ be reveal'd to the Soul in this distress, the Soul lays fast hold of him by saving Faith, and then is the new Creature Born, and with the natural Infant comes crying into the World; dissolves in Penitential Tears, with kindly meltings, that all its horrors could not effect. This is the Repentance unto Life, ne'er to be repented of, which gives the first dawns to true Peace: Sometimes surprising the Soul with an ability to cry out with *St. Thomas, My Lord, and my God*; oftner enabling it progressively to perfect Holiness in God's fear, till it flower up into the full assurance of Hope. Few escape all degrees of these legal Terrors, that are truly Converted; no, scarce such as are sanctifi'd from the Womb, escape them wholly, but one time or other sip of the bitter Cup, if they live many Years. Take heed of two mistakes here, either of bantering them as meer fits of the Spleen, as some have. *Vid. Dr. Scot Vol. 1. Sermon. 1.* Or of quarrelling with God's Providence for not feeling more of them: If the Cure be wrought, rather thank him for the gentleness of his Hand.

11

Measure therefore the Truth of this Matter by spiritual Illumination; a practick sense of Truth; by Humility and fear of offending God; hatred of Sin; shiness of Temptation; love to good People, as such, for Holiness sake, however differing in lesser matters; making Conscience of Thoughts; affecting * close walking with God; Delight in more Spiritual Duties and Truths; admiring of Christ's Person, and Love; thirsting after greater Purity of Heart, and Sanctity of Life; a mortification of the Sin of Con- stitution, Habit, the darling Lust, that most offended God, and wounded the Soul, &c. the surest grounds to go upon: which as we clear up to our selves, so will our evidences for Heaven.

* Bp. San-
derson *redu-
ceth all to
two special
Marks of sin-
cerity, which
he says are as
good as a
Thousand;
namely, Inte-
grity and
Constancy:
For these two
are never in
the Hypocrite.
Lay these two
together, and
they'll make a
perfect good
Rule for us to
judge our own
Hearts by.* p.
176, and 178.

Nehem. 8.
10.

Take not up with a false Peace from stupidity; nor depend too much on any extatick Rapturous Motions, which the Devil, as an Angel of Light, or Nature, or both conjunct, may impose upon us; by mimicking what's real in the Saints: See that Peace and Holiness go Hand in Hand; and that all transports of Joy, are seconded with higher acts of Self-denial, and Vigor in Obedience; their proper Issues if genuine: *The Joy of the Lord is our Strength*, if right, they usually flow in after great Difficulties and Sufferings; or while under them; or preceed them, as encouraging Viaticums; but seldom are of long continuance. I have known some after shifting from Sect to Sect, to measure the truth of Principles by the Peace

Peace they found upon espousing a Party; a fatal mistake, I fear, to many; which runs them blindly into the Spirit of a Party, quite opposite to a Spirit of Charity, the very Soul of Christianity. Don't be too greedy then of comfort, which some too hastily snatching at, have pluck'd only Green-Fruit to set their Teeth on edge; whereas this should be left to hang like ripe Fruit, which in its season would drop into our Laps. To expect true Peace and Joy, without sound Knowledge and Practice, is to build without a Foundation: All saving Knowledge encreases Faith, which is the very Spring of Obedience: If we would rejoice in Christ Jesus, we must know him in whom we have believed; if we have true Peace, it's a Peace in believing: And Christ Promises the Comforter to such as keep his Commands: And if we do the Doctrine of Jesus, we shall know it to be of God. O the Blessed circulation of Knowledge and Practice, so productive one of another! iWthout advancement in Sanctification, all pretences of this kind, are but Presumption and meer Self-flattery. Dread therefore a Peace that makes thee Slothful and Careless, as Poison and Delusion: But if holy and industrious, and yet feel little of it, or rather the contrary, remember as the Shadow follows the Body, tho' not always observed; so does Peace Purity, tho' it be not always felt; you are in the way of Peace, and first or last, Peace is your Portion.

2. Spare not any one Sin ; leave no unmortified Lust standing in its full Strength : If it do not absolutely destroy you, which it mightily threatens, yet it will bring down God's Judgments ; and when the Storm comes, or Death, 'twill terrifie like the Appearance of the Devil : Down with it then to the ground ; lay the Ax to the Root of the Tree, least God take you in hand, to your infinite Terror.

3. Take heed of delays ; strike while the Iron's hot ; work every Conviction, while warm, home upon the Soul : Presume not to intrench on God's Prerogative, who is Lord of us, Time and Seasons, and Master of his own Favours : Work to Day, and talk not of to Morrow, least the Fate of the Fool in the Gospel follow. The Wind blows when and where it listeth ; hoise Sale then to every Gale, which will waft you with speed and ease towards the eternal Shoar of Blessedness : If you loiter, you may find your selves becalm'd ; the kind wafting breezes over the Munfoons spent : so may be forc'd to tug hard to little purpose, and lye long beating at Sea, expos'd to Storms and contrary Winds. Remember delay every day strengthens the indisposition, and encreases the delusion ; one lazy step disposes to another ; agility comes by Exercise ; the sleepy Disease is not cur'd but improv'd by yielding. Consider this is Satan's main Battery, which has slain its Ten Thousands, and carries most to Hell ; avoid it accordingly. When Men are of-

fer'd

fer'd great Things, they accept the offer, and comply with the Terms immediately; ne'er think you are in earnest for Heaven, while you delay.

4. Labour to be the same in your Walk, you are upon your Knees; get and keep, as much as is possible, Communion with God; press into the Secret of his Presence: the Soul will be employ'd, if not thus, much worse: This will entertain and delight it, and make it in proportion die to every thing else: The surest Method to die to Sin, and drop delays: Men love not God, only because they don't know him; and till then they'll hug their Lusts, and hang off from him.

5. Fear God truly, and nothing slavishly: Expect the Enemy and sharp Conflicts; Arm with Faith and Patience to maintain your Post; no Fight, no Conquest; no Victory, no Crown: Sneak-bies are often kill'd skulking, while the Bold and Brave come off safely in Triumph. Never shrink or compound with Satan, but ever resist and disdain him, as a conquer'd Enemy: Remember the *fearful and unbelieving* are put together and *Rev. 21. 8.* rank'd in the black Catalogue. The darkness of the Night, hideous Caverns, Grottos, &c. naturally strike timorous Spirits with horror, especially if the apprehension of Evil Spirits be at that time powerful: But if Duty call, balk no place or opportunity of performing it, but manifest trust in God, the more Danger the more Honor, only take heed of rambling out of his way.

Capel of Tem- way. " To fear and fly the Devil, when
 ptation. p. 58. " Providence casts us on such circum-
 " stances, is to pay him some kind of
 " Homage; a kind of serving Satan, as one
 " observes, and adds, We must stand ; bet-
 " ter quake, than serve Satan ; better
 " tremble every Vein, than Sin ; better
 " die in the place, than fly from it ; be-
 " cause it's a flying from Satan ; and he that
 " in this sense flies him, seems to distrust
 " God's Providence over him for that
 " particular. This is a yeilding to the
 " Devil ; God is angry with it, and it's
 " often the way to greater danger ; what
 " if by this shifting the Place, we find
 " ease for the present ? Yet it's but his
 " skill, like a Lightning before Death ;
 " it leads us securely into the Hands of
 " the same, or some other Temptation.

6. Act in all kinds with vigor, but still
 in humble dependance ; lay failings at
 your own Door, but ever ascribe Succes-
 ses to God : If you trust or applaud Self,
 a fall will ensue ; the glory of his Grace
 he will have, or of his Justice. If you
 believe, it is by the exceeding greatness
 of his Power ; *even according to the working*
of his mighty Power, which he wrought in
Christ, when he raised him from the Dead :

Ephes. i. 19,
 20.

1 Pet. i. 5. *And the Power of God must keep you to Sal-*
vation if you persevere. Live as holily,
as if you was to be Justified by your own
Works, and your best done, think and
say, you are an unprofitable Servant ; ab-
hor your own Righteousness as filthy Rags,

Philip. 3. 9. *and desire to be found in Christ, not having*
your

your own Righteousness, but the Righteousness which is by Faith in him. Savour the Doctrines that tend to depress Pride, and exalt his Glory: Such as *Honor him, he will Honor*; and by nothing do we it more, than by the exercise of a profound Humility.

All these Arguments are naturally deduceable from my own failures, which, I hope, may afford the greater Cogency to the serious Reader, which I intreat him humbly to apply to himself, and take warning.

“ **I** Will love Thee, O Lord, my Strength.
 “ The Lord is my Rock, and my Defence,
 “ my Saviour, my God, and my Might,
 “ in whom I will Trust, my Buckler,
 “ the Horn also of my Salvation, and my Refuge.
 “ I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be Praised, so shall
 “ I be safe from my Enemies. The Sorrows of Death compass’d me; the Pains
 “ of Hell came about me; the Snares of Death overtook me. The Lord hath
 “ chasten’d and corrected me sore, but he hath not given me over unto Death.
 “ Thou hast thrust sore at me, that I might fall; but the Lord was my Help.
 “ The Lord is my Strength and my Song, and is become my Salvation. He shall
 “ take me out of many Waters, he shall deliver me from my strongest Enemy,
 “ and from them which hate me; for they are too mighty for me. They prevented me in the Day of my Calami-
 “ ty,

" ty, but the Lord was my Upholder.
 " I call'd upon the Lord in Trouble, and
 " the Lord heard me at large ; the Lord
 " is on my side. The right Hand of the
 " Lord bringeth mighty things to pass.
 " I shall not Die, but Live, and declare the
 " Works of the Lord. I will pay my
 " Vows before them that fear him. I
 " will thank Thee, O Lord my God, with
 " all my Heart, and will praise thy Name
 " for evermore : For great is thy Mercy
 " toward me, and Thou hast deliver'd my
 " Soul from the nethermost Hell. Yea,
 " let them now that Fear the Lord con-
 " fess that his Mercy endureth for ever.
 " Give ear now, O Lord, unto my Pray-
 " er, and ponder the Voice of my hum-
 " ble desires. Teach me thy way, O
 " Lord, and I will walk in thy Truth;
 " unite my Heart to fear thy Name.
 " Lord, make me humble, and keep me
 " watchful and thankful, for Sweet Je-
 " sus's sake. Thy Vows are upon me,
 " Lord make me faithful, abounding in
 " Obedience and Praise. Defend me from
 " the Crafts and Assaults of the Devil,
 " Thy Wrath, and everlasting Damnati-
 " on : Stand by me in all my Spiritual
 " Conflicts, in the Hour and Agony of
 " Death, when all forsake me. And in
 " the terrible Day of Judgment, be
 " my Blessed Hope and Confidence.
 " Whom have I in Heaven but Thee ?
 " And on Earth that I can desire besides
 " Thee ? O guide me by thy Counsels,
 " and

" and after receive me to Glory. Let
 " the Words of my Mouth, and the
 " Meditation of my Heart, be alway ac-
 " ceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my
 " Strength and my Redeemer. Now to
 " the Sacred Trinity in Unity, and
 " Unity in Trinity, be Eternal Halle-
 " lujahs World without end. *Amen.*

N PART

PART III.

Consisting of an Account of the Methods of Divine Grace, in a Recovery of the Author from violent Temptations.

I Should now draw a Curtain over the remains of my Life did not the same Argument still prevail, that first engag'd me : viz. God's Glory, &c. To manifest the most admirable and amazing Goodness of the ever Blessed God, whose Mercy may well indeed be term'd his darling Attribute, while it relieved so surprizingly a vile, helpless Worm : And to comfort and encourage, if possible, poor tempted, desponding Spirits.

God's Grace, even to the least of Sinners, is truly glorious ; but the greater they are, still more astonishing are the rich displays thereof ; therefore if after a blazoning of my own Rebellion, I describe the most excellent loving kindness of my dear Lord and Master, tho' it need no foil to set it off, yet it may appear to the dim sighted more Illustrious.

Many, I know, repute it a piece of Modesty, to suppress Favours of this nature ;

ture ; and for ought I know, some circumstances may make it so : But where Love to Souls animates the Design, without a squinting look of Pride and vain Glory, I think there needs no Apology. Pride, as one well expresses it, " is the Shirt of the Soul, first put on, and last put off. We have all Reason therefore to fear, while the House stands, the Leprosie will stick to the Walls, so must be cautious; and I pray God grant me my full share.

a good saying.

Charron of Wisdom.

I return to that part of the Narrative where I broke off.

I still remain'd under Distress, and now and then some smarter Twinges gave me disturbance: But at length God was pleas'd to give me a glimmering Hope. One Day as I was reading a Sermon of that holy Prelate Arch-Bishop Layton, God Blessed some passages much to my reviving: I heard a Sermon a little after, which gave me more; I sat under it with Terror; but in the close, St. *Austin's* Sickness was touch'd upon before his Conversion; in which he was represented, as one desperate, in his own Thoughts dying, and going to Hell, yet his Heart was hard, even to stupidity: This Instance running so parallel with my own Case, in this particular, and another very emphatically, drew Tears of Joy from me: But still nothing fix'd long to do me Service, tho' some prov'd a present stay.

3
Serm. 16. p. 291. The whole Paragraph, especially the close.

Here would appear a particular Providence, were all circumstances related:

It may suffice in the general, that God gave me comfort by some particularities, which before had a great hand in casting me down very remarkably.

The first absolute turn given to my Distress, I observ'd, was, as I was coming home from a Friend I accidentally met with, to whom I had disclos'd my State: He endeavour'd to comfort me; telling me; He that had begun a good work in me, would finish it; adding some more particulars; and tho' plain things, yet they reliev'd me. As I walk'd home, I was contriving what return to make to God, upon supposal of his Mercy; among the rest, this was one, that I have here endeavour'd to accomplish by this performance. I resolv'd then to expose my self and give God Glory; but finding some Methods I then propos'd to fall short, I pursu'd this as best answering my Design: In the midst of these purposes, some Beams of hope darted in upon me, which, blessed be God, prov'd the first dawns to break of Day, after a long and dreadful Night that overwhelm'd me. I came home now with a visible change in my Countenance, and from this very Day, the light encreas'd more and more, till it came to bright day. *When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? And when he hideth his Face, who then can behold him?* In a little time I was persuaded to go to the Sacrament: Just before I receiv'd it, God bless'd a good old Book to my great encouragement; they were plain Truths, but came with

with a mighty force upon me: I felt great assistance at the holy Ordinance, and ne'er felt my Terrors after.

Some time after, I was discoursing with an old Acquaintance, about the sad State I had been in: Some serious Words passing, occasionally drew from me this glorious Confession; which I hope flow'd immediately from the assistance of the holy Spirit, and accordingly desire here solemnly to Praise him for it, as an act of most profound condescension, to such a sinful, worthless Worm: " 'Twas this; I do believe as firmly in Jesus Christ, as tho' I saw him with my very Eyes standing before me: The impression was then as strong within, as my Words were strong and emphatical; they much affected my Friend, a very ingenious Person, who reply'd with great earnestness; I would give the whole World I could say so. Observe how the way of Duty, is the way to Peace; and hearty Designs of doing good, are the surest Methods of receiving it.

I had formerly read many Books, on purpose to establish my Faith in this great Point, but alas! after all, 'twas too notional: It nearly concerns all therefore, who desire to be fix'd in the belief of this main Article, upon which our All depends; to intermix their reading and study with ardent Prayers; that Christ may be reveal'd in them; which will give them another kind of perception of that matter, than all the meer Book Knowledge they were ever Masters of.

"a firm belief in it.

"I thank God, I can say so too.

*read
pray*

God strengthened my Faith wonderfully by those very Methods Satan attempted to shake it. Those vile injections, with their strange concomitant circumstances related above, were very Instrumental in this kind, and are, I bless God, still to this Moment; God improving them to reinforce my Faith, to the confounding at once all my Doubts.

O the Kind, Wise, powerful Providence of the blessed God! How did it out-shoot the Devil with his own Bow! and turn his cursed Design, on his own Pate! Thus *out of the Eater came forth Meat, and out of the Strong came forth Sweetness*: Glory to Thee, O Lord most high: *Eternal Praises* are Thy due; O bring me, bring me at last to that Blessed Place, where I may be in a capacity incessantly to perform it.

After this happy turn, as I gain'd freedom of Mind, I made very serious Reflexions on the Mad and Sleepy part of the World, amidst so much Light: I found I had been sleeping on the top of a Mast, in the midst of a roaring, tempestuous Sea: The sense of my danger made me pity such as I saw deeply immers'd in the World, plodding on tamely to destruction. The strange affecting Light I saw by, fill'd me with wonder at Mens stupidity, till I reflected on the Vail that had been on my own Heart. I had strong and lively apprehensions of the worth of my Soul; the vast importance of Eternity, and the precipitate Mo-
tions

tions of time. I saw what a massy Treasure I had lost; so keen was the Edge of my Thoughts on this Subject, that I snatch'd with perfect greediness, at the nimble gliding Minutes, as the Thirsty do after Drink: No Prodigal turn'd absolute Miser, outdid me: O! how did I wish and wish again, for the golden Sands run and gone? when I saw clearly what I had profusely squander'd away? The vivid Sense of this made me Read, Hear, and Pray, with the greatest activity: I frequented Sermons, &c. with as great a keenness of desire, as the hungry Soul has to his Food; and receiv'd all, with as peculiar a gust, even greater than I had ever before entertain'd any Diversions.

Dr. Conant's }
Serm. I read
with great
delight and
profit.

Blessed God! I beseech Thee dart some of these thy quickening Rays, into every drowsie Soul that may Read these Lines; make them pungent and awakening; O thou that hast the residue of the Spirit. Let not precious Time sit heavy on the Hands of any; the Loss of which, when they know its true worth, will press harder than the weight of Mill-Stones: And for thy Mercy sake in Jesus, ever retain on my poor Soul, the blessed Impression, in its full and useful Strength. Amen.

11 - a Prayer

I related above, how God in his Providence cast me on a Passage in an Author, that wounded my very Heart, and brought my Hopes to the lowest Ebb: But now, thro' infinite Mercy, the Tide turn'd to my exceeding comfort, thro' the same Channel it oppress'd me. Thus re-

Dr. Preston's }

Blessed to
him.

covering some fedateness of Mind, I took up some pieces of the aforesaid Author: In reading him, I found surprizing Light and Comfort springing up in almost every Page: This unexpected Success, made me covet more, till I read his Works very near complete; by which I got more spiritual Illumination and Joy, than by any I ever met with, next the holy Scriptures.

Whoever seriously reflects on this, and the other Passages of my Restauration; will evidently see, with holy wonder, God stepping back, as it were, in the very same Path he turn'd his back upon me in fore displeasure. 'Tis very useful to observe this more narrowly, that we may be the better Instructed in the wise and powerful Methods of his Providence, and be more strongly impress'd with the Sense that he is the very Life and Soul of all Means, to deject or revive; the great All in All. The true practick belief of which we all naturally are very backward to; and the Best have but too great Reason to bewail their deficiencies of this kind.

I believe God usually blesses the Labours of holy Souls, of mighty zeal for his Glory, even when their Heads are laid, with greater Success than he does many popular Discourses; for *such as Honor Him, He will Honor.* Some Preach themselves more than Jesus Christ, and teach their own glory, more than the pure weighty Truths of the Gospel: They meet with many very fond of the Commodity, who, thro' the predominancy of itching Ears,

Ears, and carnal Fancy, suffer themselves to be tickled to Death with a Feather, nauseating plain Truths of greatest importance. Purity and Simplicity are Truth's best Ornaments, while view'd in the Light of God's Word and holy Spirit; humane Embellishments too often Eclipse its native Beauty. *Adam* and *Eve* in Innocency needed no Cloathing, nor does pure naked Truth any Set-offs of Art to recommend her to an honest Heart, and an awaken'd Conscience: Her Charms lye in her unaffected simplicity; and the more she appears so, the more ravishing are the attractives of her Beauty, to the Spiritual Eye. 'Tis fallen guilty Man that needs the covering of Skins to hide his shame, and a sickly disordered Fancy, that delights to wrap it self in Fig-leaves: Nakedness was Man's, as it is, and ever will be, Truth's Perfection.

Holy Men have much of God's Spirit, which enriches their Labours; and as it breath'd in them, it breaths afterwards upon them; tho' dead, yet they speak Words of Life. 'Twas some of the last dying Words of that excellent Person I just mention'd: " I see I shall change my place, but not my Company: He liv'd long in Communion with God, and now was going more fully to enjoy it. He was a Person of great Parts and Learning, but that was the Soul of all, to animate it with Success.

I saw

U. I saw things quite in a new Light, ve-
 ry different from what I did before: 'Twas
 a Light that brought heat; I began to re-
 ceive the Light of the Truth in the Love
 .. of it: I felt the counter-part of Truths
 .. in my Heart; I had the practick Sense of
 what I scarce had in Notion before, and
 that very confusedly. The brightest Truths,
 without a Spiritual Sensation, are but like
 Beautiful Objects display'd before the Blind,
 that make no impresson. This is the true
 Reason why Sensualists and Formalists
 repute Religion a dull Business; because
 they ne'er took Pains to feel its Power,
 which lets them into a perception of the
 true Peace and Joy it affords: This makes
 them despise what they know not, and ri-
 dicule especially, the Mystick Spiritual
 part of it; which they reproach as er-
 rant Cant, and meer Jargon, at best En-
 thusiasm: An opprobrious Term, that
 blackens it, and sounds very popular.

U. I scarce ever read the Bible, that holy
 blessed Book of God, that makes wise to
 Salvation; nor scarce any other good
 Book, but my Heart was warm'd, hum-
bled, enlighten'd, quicken'd, or comforted.
 I could now see and observe God in his
 Providence; in Sermons, suiting his Word
 to my Wants; in my ordinary Conversa-
 tion; in Dangers; Deliverances; in
 Afflictions; Mercies; in the works of Na-
 ture and Grace; in publick and private
 converſes. To all which and much more
 I found my self stark blind before.

a sight of God
 in every
 thing.

A Spirit of Prayer I found pour'd out upon me, even to cry, *Abba*, Father; my Petitions were more strong, lively and spiritual, with humble confidence of acceptance. I felt a new freedom, aptitude and readiness to call God Father, to which I was an utter stranger before, at least as to the vital feeling sense of the Expression. I hung all the weight of my hopes of prevalency entirely on the Merits and Intercession of the All-propitiating Sacrifice, and All-powerful Advocate, Jesus Christ the Righteous; that Lamb of God, which takes away the Sin of the World.

I took a new and peculiar delight in good People; Pious Discourses; Religious Exercises; in private Recesses; to Read, Meditate and Pray: I found that in Solitude, I ne'er cou'd meet with amidst vain Company and Diversions; even Peace, and holy Joy. The affairs of the World became a Burthen; and all its great and pompous things lost their Charms: Sermons and Prayers had my Affections, leaving little room for Formality and Distractions, my heart being united in God's Fear, and fix'd to give him Praise; that before was without consistence, diffusing it self like Water, at the beck of every toyish Vanity. Fear and strong apprehensions of the importance of Eternity, made me think in my Distress, I cou'd spend all my time in Devotion, which I felt now the matter of my choice, and delight.

But after all, to my Sorrow I find, both sweet and terrifying influences may lose their

their force, and the Soul grow benum'd and Lethargick, and the Spirit drag and move heavily, that once was all Fire, as in due place will appear. A very Instructive consideration to such as are unacquainted with the slipperiness and inconsistency of their own hearts.

u I felt my Soul carried out to holy Souls as such; however differing from me in Judgment: I hope I lov'd him I had not seen, in his Image in his, I had seen: I bless God most heartily, I was ne'er sensible of the Movements of any carnal inducements, to prevail with me in this Point. I found a strange readiness to forgive Injuries and Aspersions, and to digest Affronts. God exercis'd me immediately with Trials of this kind; gave me the Victory and the Comfort of it; for which I give him solemn Praise: 'Twas in an Instance that touch'd me to the quick, and one time of my Life had it happen'd, would have inflam'd me, I'm confident, to the last degree. Now Pride, Passion, Vain-glory, which hang all on a string, were like Fire over-born with much Water, that smother'd only in the Ashes: And tho' occasionally some Sparks would be rekindling, they were ever hated, and by God's assistance, more or less suppress'd.

I found the Sin of my Constitution mortifi'd, which had most wounded my Soul, griev'd God's holy Spirit, and provok'd him to Wrath. This, I hope, was not owing to alteration of Constitution, nor was it the result of slavish Fear, or
better

better Discipline, but the Grace of God; that changes the heart. Many mistake fatally here, without a real saving change; best discover'd by the pulse of the Soul, which beats high and strong in love to God, and suitable Actions of Obedience; which flow naturally as Water out of a Fountain, when the Affections are spiritualiz'd: But too many owe all their hopes to a change of Vices, jumping from one extremum to another, very plausible and affecting, where there's *the Form of Godliness without the Power*; or to alteration of Temperament; or the meer forbearance of the gross outward acts of Sin. But I Bless God, I found a shiness of the occasions of Sin; and began Reformation at the Center, the heart, the root of my miscarriages; and made Conscience of the *Motionēs primò primæ*, the first twinklings of the Thoughts.

Let no Man deceive himself; * his Conscience was ne'er thoroly awaken'd to feel the bitterness of Sin, who plays fearlessly on the hole of the Asp: 'Tis impossible for such a one to maintain his Integrity before God and Conscience; nor is he likely long to keep it in the Eye of the World. For as all approaches to Sin and Temptation are forbid by God, and for that reason defile the Conscience; so all compliances of this kind wilful, render us obnoxious to a fall. Such as express little care and self-denial to please and honour God, can ne'er pretend regularly to

* He that useth an un-

natural Dalliance

with any

Vice, does no-

thing else in

reallity, than

entertain an

Incubus De-

mon; he pro-

stitutes a

wanton Soul,

and forceth it

to commit

Lewdness

with the De-

vil himself.

Smith's Disc.

p. 463.

3

that purity of heart he requires, nor have comfortable Evidences of their sincerity.

I found a Spark of Zeal for God, his honor, and the good of Souls : My affections, once spread like Dung on the Face of the Earth, I felt now Centering in their proper Object. The load in great measure being shook off, which made my Spirit drag and move heavily in God's Service ; that averfeness, deadness and lassitude I formerly felt, I found converted into a chearful readiness and secret Ambition to be some way useful to his Glory ; which, I beg he would continue, and cut out some way in his Providence for Action, tho' in the lowest Sphere.

I now look'd thro' second Causes, upon which I so much doted, and thereby provok'd God, the jealous God. I had itching Ears before, tickled with Novelty, a fine Stile, Gesture, Elocution, neat Harangues, florid Discourses : Some of which, tho' Beautiful in their Season, yet were not like the great and plain things of the Gospel ; which I saw I must eagerly be in quest of, if I meant to be happy. I had despis'd the Ministry, but now highly honor'd it, as a glorious Instrument in God's hand ; and therefore saw that the life of my profiting by it, was bound up in his Blessing, who can blast the best when Idoliz'd, and make the meanest do Wonders, when despis'd ; as I lately had found. Let such consider this, who are eat up of a Party, to the loss of their Charity, and have *Mens Persons in admirati-*
on ;

on ; who pretend they can profit by none but such as have the *Shiboleth* of their Party.

The Mysteries of Faith ; Union with Christ ; Justification freely by Grace ; the Assistances of the holy Spirit ; Conversion, &c. when treated of, appear'd formerly Subjects so Mysterious, that I receiv'd them with great coldness : but *do this and live*, had ever been a pleasant Song, tho' God knows I made poor work of it. I thought all too much in my own Power, paying a superficial complement to God's Grace, as a Notion, rather than as a solid Foundation to rest hope and dependance upon : And I feel it still a hard task to retain a practick sense of reliance on Divine Assistance in the way of Duty, as I believe the most find that seriously set about it. Such as pretend every thing so much in their Power, if they are not some of the best Men, will one Day certainly be found some of the worst. 'Tis very incidental to all the Sons of *Adam*, to be full of Self-confidence ; the more reason we have all to suspect our selves. I say nothing in favour of sloth and inactivity, but to beat down Pride and Self-sufficiency, which we can't so easily quit, as we imagine. He that watches not aright, can neither Pray nor depend aright ; and it's as true, he that depends not as he should, will ne'er Pray nor Watch as he should ; they all depending one upon another, as does the Chain upon its several Links.

But

But now the Tables were happily turn'd; I saw my Error, and reflected sharply on my stupidity, and nothing now, I bless God, more affects me. The World, I know, is too ready to call spiritual Divinity, Mystick; and Mystick, Enthusiastick; and thus stigmatiz'd, 'tis easy to bring it into Contempt with the unexperienced.

I read now serious practical Books with great delight, even the most severe and searching; such as I dreaded before, and threw by. God poured Oil into my Wounds, and bound them up by the very same Hands he prob'd and exasperated them: Which manifestly declares the Power and Goodness of God; and indicates such to have as false rotten Hearts as my Self, who dare not come to the Light, but avoid industriously all pungent awakening Truths; and only love such as few Pillows under their Elbows to nap quietly their Days away. I was much satisfied and delighted in reading those two

Howe's
The Blessed-
ness of the
Righteous.

Life of God in
the Soul of
Man. By

Scougal.

in a Preface

by Bp. Bur-

net. one

edit. 8vo.

another 12o.

spiritual Books specified in the Margin, which gave me great insight into the Spiritual Life; abundantly proving its necessity to true Peace and Salvation, withal affording me some comfortable Symptoms begun in me. I consulted many Books, which treated of Marks of Integrity, and a State of Grace, where I met with much comfort; particularly in Bp. Hopkins, Of the nature and necessity of Regeneration. He tells us, after many useful Signs of a real Conversion, that it's the holy Spirit only, who can assist us to make a comfortable application

application of Marks to our selves ; into whose Light he resolves all our Joy and Peace in believing : By which alone we come to know our State to be good ; without whose testimony we can't be free from fears of Hypocrisie, so full of mimickry, even of what's best, in the best of Men.

Thus did the Blessed Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his Wings, to my poor, dead, benighted Soul : That Light of Lights ; the great and glorious Luminary of Heaven ; who beautifies and beautifies all the blessed above, about the Throne of God, of which he is the very central Light. Thus did he gradually dispel the Clouds of Ignorance, Sensuality, and Unbelief, and the horrors of that dreadful Night they procured. Thus the Day spring from on high visited a blind Mole burrowing in the Earth, grovelling in the very Valley of the shadow of Death, chain'd to his Lusts like a Galley-Slave ; a Vassal to Satan, the worst of Tyrants. The blessed Jesus shined thus into my dark Soul, till my hope and joy came to a Meridian Splendour ; even to the full assurance of hope ; till I was transported with the Light of God's Countenance, to that blessed degree, as to despise every thing that came in competition with it : And Death it self, I believe, would not have terrifi'd me at that juncture.

This Heaven upon Earth, lasted more or less many Months ; which I ever found to ebb or flow, as I was more watchful or careless. Days set a-part for privacy and

and solitude, I ever found of great Advantage to regain any abatements of this blessed Frame: Particularly, I found peculiar caresses at, or after the holy Sacrament; and I succeeded in that Duty usually, as I was more diligent in Preparation for it; and never since have intermitted it, thro' God's gracious assistance. I'm persuaded weekly Communions are most beneficial: I fear sloth is too much at the bottom of that pretended Argument used by some, against frequency, viz. that they abate that Reverence requisite at such an Ordinance. I think there is very little strength in it; and what is, lies as strong against all other holy Exercises, which we find the oftner we perform, with the greater facility and reverence we come to them, and succeed in them. Where sloth and carnality prevail to a nauseating the Ordinance; or aversion to strictness creates an indifferency; such neglects can't spring from good Principles, but declare an ill frame of heart. And such when they do come at their stated Seasons, which they take care shall be very seldom, I fear come too formally. Conscience and Custom may drive to some stinging compliances; Love only leads to free and generous acts. Where desires truly hang this way, but opportunity fails. God will graciously accept of the Will for the Deed, who measures us most by the bent of our hearts. And when his Providence so disposes of us, that we can't enjoy what we desire, if our Wants prove the

We are none of us at all better than we mean: our gracious God takes us by what we intend and mean. Every Man's Mind is himself; and a Man is what he means and intends.
Dr. Whitch.
Vol. 1. p. 96, and 97.

the subject of our grief, we may hope God will supply our outward deficiencies with effusions of his Grace, in proportion to the breathings of our Souls, and redouble his Blessing on the few Visits we thus solemnly make him. It concerns such as have long hung off from this Ordinance, or trifi'd in it, seriously to consider these things. L

Since this, God hath vouchsafed me Four very remarkable Deliverances. I was formerly precipitate, little regarding God's Providence, but in meer Notion. Thus I often headily rush'd upon dangers, sometimes tempting it; at other times I as basely relinquish'd my Duty, and distrust-ed it: But now, I bless God, I could see his hand, depend upon him, and sing his Praise. In all these Deliverances, I was in God's way, but in the last; which prov'd most hazardous, and cost me some uneasie Thoughts: An improveable hint by all serious Persons.

Most blessed God, what a dead Dog hast thou rais'd from the Chambers of Death, and the very belly of Hell, and brought into the Mount with thy Self, and made thy lovely Face shine upon him with Peace and Comfort! Could I amass all the Might and Skill of all the Arch-Angels in Heaven to praise Thee, 'twould be little enough: O accept the desire, and my wishes to do it everlastingly; till that one bright and eternal Day dawn: In the mean while let all my Powers bless Thee; and while,

O 2 others

Others wonder at the Instances of thy Mercy, make me live thy Praise for *Jefus's* sake.

Amen.

And is God indeed thus Merciful, thus ready to forgive the greatest Sinners; and able to relieve in the most deplorable Exigency, even after Sins against the brightest means? against principles of Education, Light and Conviction, Mercies most endearing, Warnings, Providences, Judgments, thro' a continued series of many Years, at the expence of the greatest Goodness and Patience slighted and abus'd? Who then has any reason, or dare, after such a Precedent, Despair, if but willing to return to God and his Duty? Despair is the complement of Sin; the Sin of Sins; the very perfection of Unbelief; a Sin greater than all the other Sins of the Life put together; that fastens the Guilt of all our Sins upon us, without which the greatest cou'd not hurt us. Shall any then presume to think or say, their Sins are greater than God's Mercies, or Christ's Merits? To act thus, after such an Instance of boundless Compassion, is to despise our own Mercies, and spurn at the yearning Bowels of Love and Mercy it self: 'Tis to gratifie the Devil, ruine our Selves, and provoke God in the highest degree.

1. Then, let the poor tempted weary Soul, receive Encouragement, be its Case what it will; as he will be ready to suppose it, as bad as possible; for it's as natural for a truly humbled awaken'd Sinner, to think his Condition singular, and him-

himself the worst and vilest Creature under the Cope of Heaven, as 'tis for a Man awake to have the use of his Senses; or one long kept in a dark Cavern, to be overcome by the glaring Light of the open Sun. To pass suddenly from one extrem to another, causes violent Impressions. The Scriptures compare a State of Sin, to that of Death, Sleep, and Darkness: What a perception then a Soul must have in passing from extremities of this kind, to the contrary, may be imagin'd, but more sensibly experienced. 'Tis Satan's Policy to keep Men in ignorance as long as possible; but when they will see, his next attempt is, that they may see nothing but Sin and Misery, to consummate Despair.

'Tis expedient in these Cafes, sometimes to make liberal concessions, and allow the troubled Spirit to suppose his State, as his Fears suggest: Otherwise he continually harping on this string, will admit of no Consolation, but what's grounded on this supposition. Till these measures were taken with me, the best Advice made no more impression upon me than Water does upon a Rock; but Counsels grafted on the conclusions I form'd of the singularity of my Case, I found gave a turn to the edge of my Thoughts.

Are you then a prophane Libertine, a presumptuous Sinner against Light, Mercy, &c. a backslider in Heart, a Hypocrite, a Formalist, a Pharisaick Self-justiciary, a Persecutor, an Idolater? Are you any of these,

these, or all these, and worse, if worse can be? Remember then the Success of the poor humbled Publican; the returning Prodigal; the converted Pharisee; who, after the exertion of a proud bitter Zeal, breathing Blood and Slaughter against the Church of Christ, commenc'd, thro' the exceeding redundancy of the Grace of God, one of the most glorious Saints God ever had on Earth. Think of *David*, *St. Peter*, and *Manasseh*; who made the People do worse than the Heathen: Read *2 Chron.*

• 33 Chap. and then let your black disordered Fancy outstrip, by the power of Imagination, his realities: Dip your Pencil as deep as may be in Melancholy apprehensions; and let the accuser of the Brethren guide your Hand, while you draw the Picture of your vile, miserable State; yet rest assur'd, *there's Mercy with God that he may be fear'd; and plenteous Redemption in Jesus Christ*; and that for you, if but humble and believing.

• Let no sense of Unworthiness drive you from Christ, but to him, who is only Physician to the Sick; Rest to the Weary and heavy laden; and a Saviour, not to the Righteous, but lost Sinners; who rejoices more at the Return of the lost Sheep, than at the Ninety nine which ne'er went astray. Every one that does but Thirst is invited; and the more thirsty, the more welcome: *Ho every one that Thirsts, let him come and Drink of the Waters of Life freely: Come buy Wine and Milk, without Price and Money.* This thirst and desire manifests

Isai. 55. 1.

a secret attraction of Christ, which are no where found, but where his Mysterious influx is the spring of them. Only take heed of that cursed Doctrine of Devils; of sinning because Grace abounds, quite contrary to the whole strain of the Gospel: Because Christ Justifies the Ungodly, and his Merits and God's Mercies are more glorified in the Pardon of the greatest Sins, some cry up Faith and free Grace, to the destruction of Purity and Holiness. The Treasures of God's Mercies display'd in this kind, are only intended as an Encouragement to such as truly hate, and are willing to forsake their Sins. I have heard some say, if they did not Sin greatly, how cou'd Grace abound? The more Sin, the more is God's Mercy and Christ's Merits glorifi'd: What Fiendish Language is this? Hell it self can't spit more rancorous Venom; a Doctrine that makes certain Ship-wreck of Faith and a good Conscience: What gross Folly and Impudence is it for any Man, walking in the Lusts of his own Heart, to fanſie and aver himself to be a part-
ner of that Redemption, whereof so great a part is to deliver us from the Power of our Iniquities, to renew our Hearts, and reunite them to God, and possess them with his Love. I wish such Wretches would think seriously upon that terrible Text, *For there are certain Men crept in un-
awares, who were before of Old ordain'd to
this Condemnation, Ungodly Men, turning the*

*Encou-
ragement,
to whom
most due?*

*Arch-Bishop
Layton,
Serm. 16. p.*

Jude 4.

1 Tim. 6. 3. Grace of God into Lasciviousness. If any
4. Man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome Words, even the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Doctrine which is according to godliness; he is Proud, knowing nothing.

Tit. 2. 14. thing. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar People zealous of good Works. Take heed but of this Rock, and let nothing retard thy flight to the City of Refuge.

○ If you are fuller of Sin, of all sorts and sizes, than the Sea of Water, the Sun of Light, and Hell of Darknes; yet remember they are not infinite; that nothing but final Unbelief can cut you off from an infinity of Mercy and Merits; believe on Jesus Christ; or at least say, Lord, I believe, or desire to believe, help thou my Unbelief: Look upon Despair as tamely lying down in the very bottom of Hell. If a perfect stranger to God, seek ardently his Friendship without delay: If a decliner from his ways, drop'd quite into security long persisted in; stir up your self to Repentance; to the attainment of your first Faith and Love; that you may be able to do your first Works; Pray incessantly, earnestly; strive against the Stream; hope and depend, tho' with much weakness and reluctancy.

○ Be your case as bad as the Devil and an awaken'd wrangling Conscience can make it; yet flee to Christ, tho' you can't so much as touch the Hem of his Garment; Study and plead the Promises, read Treatises

tises on that Subject. Has God heard any out of the Belly of the Grave and Hell, as it were, and shall you Despair of help and Mercy? Is God's hand shortened, that he cannot save? Or his Bowels shrunk, that he will not? Is the Sun the emptier of Light, for shining? or weary of bestowing his Beams upon Dunghills? Dare you say, the Sun of Righteousness has no Rays for you, when you see him lavish them upon a benighted Soul, upon the very Verge of the bottomless Pit? Can your Case be reputed singular after reading mine? Know, 'tis as natural for all in your State to think so, as for the Sick to groan, and the Lame to halt; every one thinks his own Wounds most painful; his Burthen most intollerable; and every awaken'd Sinner, his Heart the vilest. Conscience enlighten'd, Sins appear like Motes in the Sun, which before lay hid, and with peculiar aggravations, which overwhelm the Soul with a sense of Guilt and Misery: No wonder then it thinks every one's Case better than its own: But know this is a most false and unreasonable charge; for none can know another, as he does himself; and 'tis better to feel the smart of your Wounds, which may quicken you to seek a Cure, than to die of a Gangrene without Pain.

Sink your self lower by your sooty Thoughts, if you can, than I was; set Imagination a Tilt, that mighty Engine of Torment, tho' ply'd with all the Skill
the

the black Art can afford it; and suppose, if you can, your Case more desperate than mine, acting but a spark of Reason. How long a day of Grace did God vouchsafe me? O never enough adored Mercy and Patience! Don't then say yours is past: God's Thoughts are not like yours.

*not guilt, but
Love of sin,
only can ruin
us.*

*Desire
of faith.*

But if you will have yours the worst; know, be it what it will, 'tis not your guilt, but the love of Sin, that can ruin you; and look upon a strong desire of Faith, if not as the first dawns, yet as an earnest of it. Do the Streams of natural

desires rise thus high above their Fountain? Look upon them as touches from above: Go to the great Physician then, for he calls you, and say, Lord, help my Unbelief: A returning Soul most guilty, most glorifies him, as it demonstrates the wonders of his Love and Power. All in Heaven once were Sinners, and some of them the chiefest; God offers you Mercy, don't obstruct his Glory, and your own Happiness, by needless doubts and scruples. Your own Heart and the Devil have deceiv'd you by carnal security; don't let him now top his Design, by laying on the Corner-Stone of Despair: Be sure his Finger is in this finishing stroke of Wickedness, the more effectually to dishonour God, and ruin your Soul. Tho' in Darkness, seeing no Light; yet stay your self on the Lord, whose thoughts of Mercy are as much above yours, as the Heavens are the Earth: with whom all things are possible. Use all lawful means; keep
God's

God's way; plead the Promises; the longest Night will have a Morning: ~~Lean~~ ⊙
~~not~~ now, above all times, *to your own understanding*; trust more the Judgments of others: Stifle nothing; Confession to proper Persons and Discourse give ease: Resolve, if you must, to perish at the Foot of Christ, where none ever did, who lay there with humility; justifying him in all his procedures. Dread envious, repining, hard thoughts of God, as the sparks of Hell, which gratifie the Devil as they dishonor God, and torment your own Soul. Carefully avoid rash, passionate Expressions, which give the Enemy great advantage, and will cost you sad after-Reflections: The Temptation runs strong at this time, to think and speak hard of God and your Self, strive against it with all your might: Your yieldings here, will be Satan's great Earnings; redouble your guard; where the smartest attack is, there be sure he expects to get no small advantage, if he carry his Point.

See an Instance in Dr. Horneck's best Exercises. p. 256.

Say not as wretched I did, in the bitterness of my Soul; Christ dy'd not for me, He had no intentions to save me: To question his Will, carries with it a tacit Reflexion on his Power: Wrestle with him till he Bless you; he is best pleas'd with a holy Violence, and reiterated importunity. He'll account this pressing into his Presence, not as great Men do, troublesome and unmannerly; but give you first or last the better welcome most assuredly: Say with the Leper, *Lord, if thou*

thou wilt, thou canst make me clean : Wait with the Woman of Canaan, in great Humility, tho' his first answer be rough, and his Countenance stern; yet in due time, you shall find him the meek, gentle Lamb of God; ready to wash away your Leprosy in his own Blood; saying, I will be thou clean; and, great is thy Faith, be it as thou desirest.

See Bp. San-
derlon p. 184.
of first 14 Ser-
mons.

If the Devil and your guilty Fears attempt to stop the Breath of your Prayers, cry the louder with the Blind Man, Thou Son of David have Mercy on me: A shatter'd broken Prayer acknowledges him; none disowns him. The Prayer of the Wicked is Sin; but that of a broken Heart and contrite Spirit, is of great Estimation and efficacy. Think not your Prayer formal; a Hypocritical taking God's Name in vain, so put on the score of your Sins, a provocation inflaming your account; as the Enemy without fail will suggest. Expect not to feel affections flowing now your Soul is benum'd with grief, and your Heart contracted with Sorrow and Anguish; but know, a Sob, a Sigh, a Groan from a wounded humble Heart, has now as much Rhetorick to prevail with Heaven, as the most flowing affections at another time.

Don't confine your self to long and set Duties without some freedom of Spirit; lest Satan discourage you by the tediousness and dryness of them; heaviness and dulness, is not shook off now, as at a-
nother

nother time, by Resolution and Contenti-
 on: Lift your Soul then to God, in fre-
 quent aspirations; 'tis strength, not length
 of Duty, that God regards. Desire to be
on your Knees; and snatch at every nick
 for solemn Prayer; then if your Case ad-
 mit not of it, he'll graciously accept the
 Will for the Deed, pity your Infirmities,
 and receive your Ejaculations: Let the
 frequency of these supply the deficiency of
 Set-Duties in extremity. By such fallacies
 as are here specified, did Satan muzzle
 me, and keep me from Prayer, often in
 my extremities; let none be wholly dis-
 courag'd, if by stress of weather they have
 been forced from this Sheet-Anchor; but,
 still let them value, and be as solicitous
 to keep it, as Mariners are theirs in a
 Storm: tho' God's Providence save many
 left to the rage of Winds and Waves;
 yet no Man must fling up the Means of
 his safety, while they continue in his Hands,
 but ply all with diligence.

Cry thus with holy importunity; and
 you shall receive your Sight in God's
 due time, ever best, tho' uneasiness make
 the present seem most seasonable. If the
 unjust Judge was thus overcome, be sure
 the Judge of the whole Earth will come
 at length to your rescue, a Saviour to all
that with Patience wait for him: Remem-
 ber it's Satan, who once tempted, that
 now terrifies: 'Tis he that overcharges
 you, who formerly softned your Guilt:
 He had the same design in chase he now
 has, only has shifted his Methods: He
 com-

*Read Dr.
Sibbs's Soul's
conflict, Chap.
21. And you
will meet with
surprising
Truths.*

compounded with you before, now would carry you by Storm: God's holy Spirit has enlighten'd you, or he had wheedled you on in darkness; fear not the Light, tho' troublesome to your weak distemper'd Eyes.

Christ all this while secretly draws and supports you: have Patience, and weather the Storm a little; Heaven is worth a sharp brunt: Keep your hold, and all is your own; be of good Cheer, the great Physician calls you, tho' by harsh Methods, yet with most kind Intentions: God despises not the Day of small things, don't you: Make not too much hast, he that believes, does not: He waited long for your return to him; don't then grow impatient, if he make you tarry: He has gracions Designs even in his delays; Peace, Heaven, and Blessedness, ne'er are thought to come too late when they are enjoy'd: Stay and hope, and he that shall come, will come; it may be quickly; if not, yet at length the more comfortably. Even so, Pr. Lord Jesus, come to every tempted, trembling Soul. Amen.

My just concern for Persons in this doleful State, has made me run this Topick out of compass: The unexperienc'd may think it tedious, but poor tofs'd weary Spirits, if God's Blessing give it any effect, will think it as much too short: Let this consideration apologize for this excursion, to all strangers to trouble of Mind. I close all under this Head, with a Passage occurring in my extremity: 'twas this: One of good

know-

knowledge in Religion, tho' little under its Power, observing the pressure of my Distress, let fall this Expression; " Do you think God will give you two Hells? " He does not Punish at this rate here " and hereafter. It pleased God to bless it, as some stay to my Spirit; and it really wants not its weight: I pray God others may consider it, and what else has been said, to extract some gleams of hope and comfort out of all: But let none mis-
 apply it.

2. Let all hence learn to give and receive a good Education, as a vast Blessing, and be sure to follow it with many hearty Prayers: All, it's true, may seem to be worn out and lost, yet they prove a weight, and pull back more or less; and when God gives a new spring to all, as he often does, they'll be found of inconceivable advantage. Good Principles may be almost overgrown with Weeds of Vice, to the exhausting almost the very Life of them, and yet the Hand of Heaven can revive them: Prayers of pious Parents may hang long upon the File unanswer'd, after their Heads are roll'd into the Dust; and yet their Children may in due time find the Blessing of such an Inheritance: God, for wise and holy Reasons, may suspend the answer in their Life-time; to wean them from the World, and exercise their Faith and Dependance on him; and yet one Day may find, they were far from being put up in vain. Corn comes not up as soon as sown, but after Faith and Patience, a
 fruit-

fruitful Harvest appears. I solemnly here bless God for the returns of this sure, and best part of my Inheritance, and beg the remains behind, in his due time. Let Parents that neither Pray for their Children, nor Instruct them as they should, consider how barbarous and inexcusable they'll one Day be found. Some I have known to do little, but pretend to expect the Grace of God; a meer idle, wicked pretence: For such as use not means, give the Lie to their own Prayers; and affront God, if such may be supposed to pray in a blind piece of Charity. And let wicked Children, that brag they have worn off the Principles of their Education; if they have but a spark of Reason left, consider with Terror, what may be the dreadful Issue: For God does not always interpose, especially when they wilfully break thro' all Tyes, and strongest Obligations.

3. Let none presume to play the Wantons in Sin, from some precedents of God's free and surprizing Grace: Whatever he does sometimes, to declare the Treasures of his boundless Mercy, yet he ordinarily leaves Men to Die as they Live. But such as turn his Grace into Wantonness, have least reason to expect such a favour; and I believe seldom obtain it. No Man governs himself by these Principles in lesser Matters. Who is so Mad to commit a capital Crime, upon presumption of escaping the Hands of Justice, merely because some have been pardon'd at the Gallows? Such as help'd to seduce me, I
fear,

- fear, are the same, if not worse; and too violent Symptoms threaten their continuance therein: One of them own'd to me, he had lost the government of himself, and was perfectly at the Lure of his Lust, tho' arriv'd to a state of Impotency: I pray God pity and relieve such miserable Souls.

An Ancient Author tells us, of an *Ar-* Greenham. p. 3
rian put to Death at *Normich*, who, a little before his Execution, ask'd if he might be sav'd by Christ: And being told he might, if he repented: He broke out monstrously into this hellish Speech: "Is
" your Christ so easily to be entreated
" indeed, as you say? Then I de- a most
" fie him, and care not for him. How abandon'd
much short of the cursed Language of Wretch!
this vile Heretick, do the actions of some where can
Men come? who despise and undervalue his own
Christ for his Patience and Forbearance; place, be
who Sin more boldly and obstinately, the in *to*ther
more his Grace abounds to them: O the World?
Hell of Wickedness, that is in Mens
Hearts!

I find no state is exempted from Tem- .. *Temptat*
ptation: No not that of Consolation; nor in all *stages*
is it a bounce of big Words, or a sudden
spurt of warm Resolutions, that secures us;
nor will whining or complaining relieve
us; but watching, praying, contending,
with a constant dependance on God: I
speak now of ordinary Temptations. He
gives us a compleat suit of Armor of his own
Contrivance, even *the whole Armor of God*;
but none for the Back, if we play the Cow-
ards: If we oppose *the Shield of Faith*,
P it

it will *quench his fiery Darts*, as sure as the Word of God is true, that recommends it.

I now experienced the truth of what experimental Divines teach, *viz.* that after sharp Conflicts, God usually pours in the Wine of Consolation, as a *Viaticum*, to go on, and in progress, to face new difficulties with fresh courage: That when a Soul has had most intimate Communion with God, by getting into the secret of his Presence; then Satan lies most at the catch, to ensnare it. When hottest, we usually catch most Cold, especially if we stand in the open Air, without movement. Too often, after warm enjoyments, the Soul is off her guard, and fearless, the Enemy industriously watches for this halting; chills and strikes a damp, that stiffens and unfits her for action. That after a long Calm, and great Serenity, a Storm is to be expected; after Suavities, some fierce encounters.

Accordingly, after much settled Peace and Comfort, a most bold Temptation accosted me, which urg'd and press'd me with remarkable Violence, Impudence and Importunity: At the same time God impress'd a mighty awe of his Presence upon my Spirit, which produc'd an utter abhorrence and rejection. I doubt not but God permitted the Devil thus to single me out for Combat, and succour'd me; that I might have the comfort of the Trial; he the glory of the Success; and Satan the Shame of a Baffle. O the pity and
mer=

merciful contrivance of my dear God ! who tim'd it so to my Advantage ; which, at another season of my Life, might have undone me, had it been thus strangely circumstantiated and reiterated. Blessed be God for a Presence of Mind, and holy Resolution : Thro' Thee alone, Lord, have I conquer'd ; to Thee be all the Glory.

Amen.

After the recovery of my Peace, I was not, that I remember, in the least assaulted in this kind, for a long while, till this sudden Onset : Which consideration, as it suggests a very fit occasion to own, and praise the kind care of my great Lord and Master, in not suffering me to be attack'd till I was well settled ; so likewise to make some useful Observations on the particularity of this Temptation, *viz.*

1. That Satan ever assaults the weakest side, most neglected ; and will not attempt us, even in that part where he has often, and with greatest facility succeeded, when he finds us very vigilant upon a strict guard : And if so, as most assuredly it is, it teaches us constant watchfulness, whereby we may avoid the trouble and terror of his Temptations, and the dangerous success of them : He dreads the cautious as he does a foil, very grievous to a proud, malicious Spirit : The very missing, or abatement of his base, troublesome suggestions, will more than compensate the expence of our diligence, beside the avoidance of so great a hazzard, as the Violence of some of his onsets expose us to ; a comfortable con-

sideration to all such as value their Peace and Salvation: And I pray God, it be suitably improv'd.

That as all Impressions of Fear, Love, and Caution, are naturally apt to abate in time, without great Vigilance; so Satan diligently expects the critical Minute, and will be sure to improve it to the utmost; either more sily, but not at all the less effectually; or by open Battery and Assault, if the Breach be practicable; especially after great Humiliations, and Experiences of God's goodness; to plunge the Soul more consummately in Despair, and thereby shake the Faith of others: For where he thus prevails, the Soul often sinks into despondency, and so the Party makes away with himself; or else, having no hopes of Heaven, turns Libertine, striving to make the best of this World: Either of which has fearful consequences, affecting themselves and others.

What safety then can we dream of in this World? No circumstances can secure us; for when the Enemy seems to fly, and leave us for a season, 'tis but to lay an ambuscade, frequently most successful.

Dr. Gilpin of
Tempt. Part
1. p. 124.

" The Devil, says one, when he fights after the *Parthian* manner, is most to be
" fear'd; when he turns his Back, he
" shoots most envenom'd Arrows, and
" whom he so wounds, he commonly
" wounds them to Death. O! how should we
then continually pray for fresh supplies
from Heaven; striving often to reimpres-
sion on our Souls, by serious Meditation, what
time

time and inadvertency may have worn off:

This is one kind of *Watching unto Prayer*; a good Preparative for it; and a circulation of Prayer and Meditation, will be found a circle of safety, infinitely beyond the power of Magick and Enchantment: The Devil laughs at such solemn Follies; and if he submit at any time to those Rules of Art, 'tis only to get the surer hold of the Artists: But holy Exercises really make him tremble. // . . .

3. That if ever we successfully oppose the craft and power of Satan, it must be in a better strength than that of our own: For strong Temptation, with sudden surprise, thrusting violently upon us, may so stun Reason, and awaken Sense, that the Soul may warp, before she can recollect her self, if God don't some way interpose; and when once we begin to yield, the Temptation redoubles its force, and our strength declines every Minute; 'tis hard then to recollect, and rally our broken Forces; and what then can be the Issue; but that the Serpent having thus wound in his Head, soon wreaths in his whole Body, to sting us at his Pleasure? Let us go out then against these formidable Foes in the Name of the Lord, as holy *David* did against *Goliath*: Their invisibility is their advantage; but if the Power of Christ rest upon us, *in the Name of the Lord we shall destroy them.* " We are surrounded with Dr. Barrow

" the spiritualities of Wickedness: May P. 459.

" we not look on our selves as Grasshoppers,

" pers, compared to these *Anakims*? and

*Spiritu
al wicked
nesses.*

“ quite despair by our own strength to
 “ vanquish and resist them? In our spi-
 “ ritual conflict with such dangerous and
 “ dreadful Adversaries, we need a large
 “ supply of the Spirit, a collation of auxil-
 “ liary Forces, an habitual support deriv’d
 “ from that invincible and infallible Spirit,
 “ which only is stronger and wiser than
 “ they.

4. That it’s good to be well employ’d
 in God’s way, when the roaring Lion is
 ranging abroad in his Walks : as we shall
 more rarely meet him, so when we do, we
 shall be sure the better to grapple with
 him ; for now we meet him with our
 Weapon in our hand, and God standing
 by to be our Second, how then can we
 fail of Victory ? But if Idle, or in By-
 Paths, we then tempt him to tempt us ;
 we put a Weapon into his hand, and dis-
 arm our selves ; we drive away our migh-
 ty Friend and Succourer, and then we
 are sure to lose the Day.

I must inculcate it once more, lest any
 mistake me, supposing I attribute all to
 the Power of the Devil : No, I think to
 lay all the blame of our Faults to his charge,
 is absolutely false, and looks like a hypo-
 critical Apology for our own Laziness : ’Tis
 too evident, had we not Traitors within,
 few or none of his attempts would succeed.
 ’Tis true, the most active Christians will
 be set upon by him, but their Victory
 over him, and his over the careless, de-
 monstrate how great a share our own
 Hearts have in our falls. There is an im-
 pregnable

pregnable Fort in our own Souls; that he can't master without our own unfaithfulness; he can sift, try, wheedle, and sollicit; but he can't force the Will, till our own consent open the Door. He is called *the Accuser of the Brethren*; to shew how ready and industrious he is to prefer an Inditement, and sollicit a Commission against good Men, when they trip, or grow secure: He has liberty to fall on the wandering and careless: And therefore the best have no more true safety, than they have of vigilancy. What God can, or may do, in restraining him in some Cases, for kind and wise Reasons best known to himself, when he has a fit and just occasion against us, is not for us to determine; nor a Rule therefore to act by, or warrant our safety upon: His Word is our sure guide, and the post of Duty, is our only place of safety. What God may permit, by way of Trial in this kind, and with design to our greater good, to which he converts it by an over-ruling Wisdom and Power, we must not be too bold to determine, tho' we know he often has, and still does so; much less venture upon any Temptation upon that presumption; for its natural and direct tendency is to our ruin: Tho' God often make winnowing, purifying, and shaking, a means to establish us; yet 'tis pure Poison in its nature, and solely owing to his Skill, that it becomes an Antidote.

A sense of our readiness to offend a holy God, and thereby giving our Enemy an advantage, shou'd teach us Humility, Vigilancy, and Dependance. Should God strictly mark what's amiss, what gaps would these throw open to the grand Destroyer? A Meditation that teaches us great caution, as well as hearty Praises to the most High.

The short of all is this: As guilt and insatiable Lusts, will make the severest part of Hell hereafter, to which Devils will prove accessional Tormentors: So our corrupt Nature, Inclinations, and vicious Habits here, are the prime Sources of our Miscarriages, tho' improv'd and excited by Satan's Skill and Malice. Take it in the Words of an excellent Person. "When we say, the Devil is continually busy with us, I mean not only some Apostate Spirit, as one particular Being; but that Spirit of Apostacy lodg'd in all Mens Natures. Where we see Pride, Self-love, &c. we may say, here and there is that Evil Spirit. All Sin in Man's Spirit, has the Central force and Energy of Hell in it, and is perpetually pressing down towards it, as towards its own place. Sins are those fiery Snakes, which will eternally lash and torment damn'd Spirits. Every Man's Hell arises from the bottom of his own Soul: Those streams of Fire and Brimstone ordain'd for the torment of the Damn'd Spirits, are rather the exsudations of their own filthy, corrupt nature,

Smith's Discourses, p. 463.

“ ture, than any external thing. Hell is
 “ not so much induc’d, as educ’d out of
 “ Mens sinful Passions and filthy Lusts:
 “ other things are but appendixes.

Would People peruse such noble and
 divine thoughts as this Author abounds in, //
 ’twould mightily tend to drive them out
 of those refuges of Lies, they foolishly hide
 their Heads in, and fill their Minds with
 a true Idea of the Christian Religion:
 ’twould convince them there’s no getting
 to Heaven by Tricks and Formalities, but
 in a way of Purity and Holiness, as being
 more a State, than a Place: They would
 see the Folly of trusting to a Pharisaical
 Righteousness, or of resting in any pitch
 of Attainments; but see the necessity of
*perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God; of
 pressing towards the Mark, forgetting what’s
 behind: of endeavouring to be Perfect as
 their heavenly Father is Perfect.*

Blessed Jesu, pity the ignorant and out
 of the way, and so support thine in all
 their conflicts, that thro’ thy mighty as-
 sistance they may finally come off more
 than Conquerors. *Amen.* L

Pr.

Diaries are grown much out of Fashion,
 but their natural usefulness, and the Ex-
 ample of some holy Souls, persuaded me
 now to attempt something of that nature.
 For want of this, I run over Head and
 Ears in Accounts with Heaven, and had
 nothing to shew to in my Distress, but was
 in perfect confusion. Had I set about this
 sooner, I had not been so great a stranger
 to Self-Examination, a faithful Monitor,
 the

//

the best preventive Exercise to keep the Soul from running deep into the Debt of Divine Justice; nor consequently had I prov'd such a Bankrupt as I found my self, even to amazement. To take some account of what passes between God and our Souls; of our Temptations, Failures, &c. in some such way as this, has a natural tendency to lead us into this Duty: It has likewise this farther use: The best may be put to a plunge in an hour of Temptation or Desertion: Now, in such Cases, when the Soul is under suffusion and forgetfulness, such a help as this in store to recur to, may afford some Evidences of our sincerity, which may have slip'd our Memories, and so prove a stay to our Spirits. And I doubt not, where it is perform'd with faithfulness, God follows it with a peculiar Blessing, as an encouragement to Industry, as many have happily found.

I fell at length into a gradual declining from the Spiritual Suavities I long enjoy'd, those Blessed Viands of Heaven; those small droppings of the Cup of the Wine of the Kingdom; which seem'd all at last to center in a more fix'd calm serenity of Spirit. The first abatement alarm'd me, and I immediately fear'd a real declension, which I knew often ended in a dangerous Apostacy: Forthwith I turn'd to Books treating of this Subject, and consulting particularly Mr. Gurnal, my hopes got above my fears, and flush'd me into Tears of Joy.

I shall not dispute whether the dropping my Watch occasion'd this Ebb ; or the fall of my Comforts, weaken'd the Spring of my Activity, (tho' it's always safest to suppose our own tardiness, as it feeds the glorious Grace of Humility) because God arbitrarily dispenses sometimes his Favours, or at least distinguishes between free gifts of Bounty, on special occasions, and common Wages. The Fruit of Righteousness is Peace, but he often indulges new Converts, and fills some before, or after their hard Conflicts, with peculiar Caresses ; so kind and tender a Master is he. Rapturous Consolations make the Soul extatick for the time, and bold in Enterprises to express her Love, setting her above the Charms and Frowns of the World ; but then they usually are short ; and if not frequently renew'd, a Case somewhat uncommon, the Soul is apt to flag in the interval. But now, true Peace and Serenity of Mind, tho' not so rapturous, is more durable, and less obnoxious to fallacy : The deepest Streams run still and smooth, while shallow Torrents are more rough and noisie : Many have felt, as they have thought, an inundation of Comforts, like a Land-Flood, that have been as speedy in their fall, as rise.

The Consolations of God, certainly are not small, but mighty Blessings ; but we can't be sure they are his, unless Obedience, Mortification, and great delight in Vital Communion with him, go Hand
in

in Hand with them. There is such a thing as natural Vivacity of Spirit, Enthusiasm, and delusions of Satan, transform'd into an Angel of Light, separate, or conjunct, the more powerfully to deceive. It nearly concerns us then, to search, sift and try what grounds we are upon ; what genuine proofs we have of our sincerity ; and what tendency our Consolations or our Peace have, to the Work of Faith and Labour of Love, infallible signs ; or else all may be but the result of Presumption and meer fallacy.

God forbid I should disquiet any cautious Souls, by promoting any needless jealousies of themselves or attainments, a thing they are too prone to without assistance ; or lull my self or others asleep by a fatal Dose of *Opium* : These Errors, God knows, are too often committed on both hands. I beg most heartily of my dear Lord and Master, that what I have, or may say, may not one tittle of it be perverted to his dishonor, or the prejudice of one Soul, which, I hope, is most sincerely calculated for his Glory in their welfare.

Blessed God, I know, by happy Experience, thy Spirit spirits all Truths, that become words of Life and Power ; I most humbly beseech Thee therefore so to influence them by thy heavenly Benediction, and special directive Providence, that they may truly subserve the honest intentions of an upright Heart. Let thy holy Spirit breath upon them, and fill these

weak

weak attempts with his energy, that the glory may entirely be thine, to whom alone it's due, for sweet Jesus's sake. *Amen.*

Let none be dejected under the want, abatement, or loss of their Comforts, if they have not notoriously sinn'd them away, but maintain'd Faith and a good Conscience, and still hold their integrity, tho' with many infirmities. Comforts are great Blessings, but not essential to a Christian; they quicken and enliven him to Duty, but Faith which purifies the Heart, productive of holiness in the Life, really denominates him. Peace may remain when ravishing Joys seem at an end, which some too much concern'd at, may really hazard a breach in their Peace: And as the Joy of the Lord is our strength, so the loss of it, if we don't spur up our diligence in proportion, to supply its defect, our Graces, for want of Exercise, fall into a *Languor*. But let none mistake a meer declension of Joy and Comfort, for a declension of Grace, especially if their Peace be not broken, which often happens; nor absolutely if it be; because tho' Temptation may royle our Peace, yet as it exercises Grace, that conquers, it strengthens it; tho' the force of the Conflict for a time, may embarrass it. Where there is the Life of Grace, there will be growth, which is as true and beneficial, when the Soul strikes deeper rooting in Humility, Self judging and Dependance, as when it springs up in holy Joy; the former is the
sure

*of
Comfort
their use.*

sure Foundation of the latter. Pride and Conceit, as they prevail, eclipse all true comfort ; if it thrive in the shade of those Vices, they are not from the Sun of Righteousness, but the meer Moon-shine of Fancie, or *Lucifer's* delusions. Never is a Soul meaner in its own views, nor more entirely devoted to God's Service, than when she tastes the true and kindly Fruits of Paradise ; this opens her Eyes to see her nothingness, the best she can do, to be infinitely beneath God's acceptance. The Eating forbidden Fruit open'd the Eyes of our first Parents, only to see their Shame and Misery, but if we gather this lawful Fruit offer'd us, 'twill make us see our Remedy, as well as our Nakedness and Misery.

Some have the boldness to tell us, all the Consolations we have been speaking of, are but the transports of superstitious Whimsies, strong Fancies, the natural effects of the blithe motions of the Blood and Spirits, or the meer Phrensie and Vertigoes of a Religioso's Brain. But these being Men of no Religion, the allegations of such improper judges are of no importance ; because having made no trial of the Christian Principles, they can form no sound judgment of their effects. Such deserve no answer, but contempt or pity, which they seem to be full of, while they discourse of these matters : like some Bedlamites in Chains and Straw, by the volatility of a Lunatick Fancy, imagining themselves Kings and Queens, fall to pitying

tying all the rest of the World, as their Vassals.

The mischief is, these have ting'd better Men in part, with their Principles: Some that pass for good Men, write and talk so much of a Mechanical Religion, and run it so far, as scare to distinguish it from what's real; making Fancy, and a sanguine Constitution, to vie with the comforts of the Holy Ghost. They discourse, as if trouble of Mind was nothing but the disorder of the Body; and ridicule legal sorrow for Sin, and terrors of Conscience, as only the Fumes of the Spleen; and rally those that take comfort from their past Sorrows and Humiliations, as the beginnings, or at least preparatives to true Repentance, only as distemper'd Melancholicks: And then no wonder if they make Mechanism compleat their project, and tell them, as they were beholden to the disorders of Nature for their Troubles, so they are to its restitution for their Comforts. Thus these Philosophick Divines strengthen the hands of the Scepticks and Materialists, and discourage poor doubting Christians.

I fear there's too much Mechanick Religion in the World; and believe it's Charity to detect it; but caution is needful, lest while Error be pull'd down with violence, the foundation of Truth be shaken, or any of the beauteous Stones of that Fabrick be defac'd. It fares in this Case, as in most, when Men run from one extreme with fierceness, they often overshoot

shoot the Mark, and run into another. Errors meerly supported by mockery and pageantry, are sometimes better left to fall of themselves, as usually they do, than precipitated with such force, as to shake any comfortable Truth. Such as have slight thoughts of Terrors of Conscience, and make them little more than the workings of the Hypochondries, I may be confident are utter strangers to experiences of that kind: Had they once felt them, 'twould strangely alter their apprehensions, and force them to drop more feeling expressions.

Certainly, there is as much difference between meer Melancholy, and terrors of Conscience, as there is between painted and real Fire, tho' they influence one the other reciprocally, and often are contounded. And as widely different are the Mechanick illusions of the Blood and Spirits, &c. in the mimicry of Divine Consolations, as is real Eating, and the dreaming of it only. *Peace in believing, and Joy in the Holy Ghost*, are like the natural Heat of the Body, which preserves the Constitution, rendring it active on all occasions: But what is meerly the result of Mechanism, is like the Feverish heat, which raises *Deliriums* in the Brain, by the high advances of the Juices of the Body, but leaves Nature at last much lower, cold and weak, dispirited, and unfit for action. The Divine Illapses, are soft and sweet, not like the false, more labour'd and noisie, that leave a Man worse than they found

found him ; but like the refreshing Air, or Sun-beams, which cherish and delight Nature, and leave the Soul in a Heavenly calm. God often gives in these after difficult Trials, or in them ; but then they are usually fet by, like Cordials, when the fainting Fit is over. He that ne'er tasted good Wine, takes up with what he can get, and thinks it so ; but he that has tasted both, is the most competent Judge of the difference ; 'tis so in the Case before us, in the Spiritual Tast, as in the Natural.

I must with shame confess, that while the Sun thus shined upon me, I did not fear, nor prepare as I should for a shower. I forgot too much the Days of Darknèss elapsed, and thought the bitterness of Death was over, and that my Nest was made on high. Thus I fondly sang a *Requiem* to my Soul, tho' with hearty Praises to God, my great and only deliverer. This alas ! made me too much forget my danger still behind ; and tho' I had read and heard many suitable Warnings ; that many after great Consolations, had fool'd themselves and ne'er recover'd them, but went howling to their Graves ; yet I was too confident, and apply'd not the Rules home to my self.

Let all take warning, see their danger, and the Devil's Design in *Embryo*, before he form the Brat, and bring it forth with their Pains and Sorrows. God suffer'd me long to bask in these refreshing Sun-beams, to solace my dark Soul, but at last gave

me to understand, I must stand upon my guard better, or the Clouds would threaten to return after the Rain.

He now suffer'd an old Temptation to give me a shock, which set upon me going to the Sacrament, and somewhat disorder'd me. Thro' God's assistance, I balk'd not the Duty, which I thought a dangerous yielding to the Adversary, which encourages him to redouble the On-set. In this Case he designs to affright from Duty; or distract in it: The first is his great Mark, as of most consequence; for if he carry this Point, freedom may ensue, but with a most treacherous design, to renew the attack with more force the next opportunity: Now the Soul being weaken'd for want of its repast, and remembring the Ease that formerly follow'd forbearance, it's too ready to compound, and close with these base terms of Peace, which give the Devil vast advantage. I Bless God he got neither of the Points against me, which should encourage all to trust God, and despise him: A cloudiness did hang upon me, but at my return, I resolv'd to sing a Psalm, hoping God would dispel all; I dip'd on the 6th Psalm, resumed courage from some expressions there, I thought remarkable, to encourage my hopes; so, I bless God, all blew over and ne'er yet return'd.

This did me great service; convinc'd me I could ne'er be safe here, but in the way of Duty, and with great circumspection; that the Enemy is most vigilant
and

*Temptatⁿ
conquer'd;
how.*

and dangerous, while I'm most secure.
 Lord, hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe ;
 for I find I fall, the Moment Thou stand'st
 not by me.

“ Most holy God, 'tis of thy Mercy a-
 lone I'm not utterly consum'd ! How has
 “ thy sovereign Grace prevented me ! and
 “ thy boundless Mercy succour'd me in
 “ my greatest extremity ! How free were
 “ thy Favours, and overflowing thy good-
 “ nefs ! To dispose me to love and re-
 “ joyce in Thee, was wondrous condescen-
 “ tion, who justly might have been the
 “ Trophy of thy fury : O while I have a
 “ Heart to conceive, and a Tongue to
 “ utter thy Praises, let them be honor'd
 “ with the employ of thy Service. Ever
 “ help me to villifie and depress my wretch-
 “ ed Self, that I may be the better fitted
 “ to exalt thy Majesty : Keep me con-
 “ tinually close to Thee, the Fountain of *Pr.*
 “ Life ; make me watchful and depen-
 “ dant, ever seeking Thy Glory, the way
 “ to true safety. Pity an indigent Crea-
 “ ture, that feels he has no strength but
 “ in the power of thy blessed Spirit : For-
 “ sake not one that desires entirely to
 “ trust in Thee. O hold up my goings
 “ in Thy Paths : Incline my Heart to
 “ Thy Testimonies : Put Thy Fear into
 “ my inward Parts, that I ne'er de-
 “ part from Thee : Make me to go in
 “ the Path of Thy Commandments : En-
 “ large my Heart, that I may run the
 “ way of them : Teach me, O Lord, the
 “ way of Thy Statutes, that I may keep
 Q 2 “ them

“ them to the end: Hold me by the
 “ Right-Hand of Thy faithfulness; and
 “ since nothing less can, I beseech Thee
 “ keep me by Thy mighty Power, thro’
 “ Faith unto Salvation; for sweet Jesus’s
 “ sake. *Amen.*

L Such is our frailty, that when plung’d
 in depths wedespond; on the other hand,
 Prosperity blotes us with strange, fond
 conceits: While our Mountain seems to
 stand strong, we think it immoveable;
 but God no sooner hides his Face, but we
 are troubled. Notions we often have, and
 talk suitably, but our real sinkings and
 soarings, bewray our feebleness: Nothing
 short of God’s mighty assistance, can bal-
 lance the inequallity of our courses, and
 keep us steddy under great changes: Ex-
 tremes of this nature set off one the o-
 ther; when we pass from extremity of
 Anguish, to great Joys, it so transports
 the Affections, that they get head of Rea-
 son, and then some disorder ensues. The
 Grace of God, that Pillar of our Souls, we
 are too ready rather to complement, than
 heartily to ask it, and really depend up-
 on it; or if we do, we are then prone
 to be too negligent in the use of means:
 I know vast is the difference between
 good and bad Mens failures of this nature,
 but still the best, are some way tardy in
 this kind.

This was too much my own Case. I
 wrong’d God extreemly in my distress,
 by my wicked censures; and when the
 Tide turn’d, my Head turn’d round with
 my

my Advancement: When 'twas Night, I said it would ne'er be Day, but the glories of that happy Morning, made me think a change at too great a distance. I felt the Joy of the Lord my strength, I delighted in God and Duty, but still was not enough wary. I beg others to observe my failings, to cherish caution: For nothing will be found more cutting than great Errors thus committed on either hand. When God surpriz'd me with his Favours, I blush'd in confusion at my rash, hasty conclusions, brooded by Despair; and tho', I bless God, my Peace is not yet broken, thro' the amazing Patience of the blessed Jesus, yet the first eclipse of my Comforts alarm'd me with some sharp reflexions on my Folly.

O my dear God, deliver me, I humbly beseech Thee, from a vain hope, that will prove like the giving up of the Ghost: Ne'er suffer me to accept of a false peace, which tends to sluggishness and security. Empty me from Vessel to Vessel, rather than I should settle on my Lees. I beg I may love Thee for thy loveliness and benignity; but lose me not, whatever severities it cost me: And when thy overflowing goodness shall indulge me with thy Consolations, help me to desire and use them for vigor in Obedience. And *may the God of Peace make me perfect in every good Work, to do his Will, working in me that which is well pleasing in his sight, thro' Jesus Christ; to whom be Glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Pr.

The first growing mischief I observ'd, was for want of timely care in the government of my Thoughts. I perceiv'd not at first the ill consequences of my neglect, till my danger convinc'd me. At first, my Mind seem'd tractable, I could lay by vain thoughts at pleasure, but the conceit lasted not long; they gradually stole upon me with great strength and prevalency, and prov'd inlets to many disorders, and have since cost me many a hard Tug. I find them most urgent in a Morning, when I shou'd be setting my Spirit right for the whole Day, and just before holy Duties, to unhinge my affections when they should be most warm and recollected: The contrivance that here appears, and the ill effects of yeilding, together with the violence they sometimes press upon me, make me suspect more than the meer bubblings of my own Heart. They insinuate themselves very speciously, but with the strength of a Charm insensibly, but too prevalently; and when they have fasten'd, 'tis difficult to discharge them.

The Mind being active, will play with straws, if it hath not something solid to work upon; Vanity emasculates it, and utterly indisposes for any good employ. Thoughts and Life, are ever of a piece; they are the spring of Actions; the first born of the Soul; the issues of Life or Death; be upon your guard here, or your labour will be ever to begin in Religion. Vain Thoughts draw off the Heart from
God,

God, and ingross the Affections: They are the root of backwardness to holy Duties, of deadness and distraction in them. Our Enemy knows, communion with God is the very life of our Souls; while we live much above, in close walking with him, we die apace to the World, and his Temptations; his great Business therefore is, to rive us off this lively converse, by some stratagem, and this is one of the most successful. Good Men are not so alarm'd at these suggestions, as at grosser Temptations: The best are not perfectly exempted from them, and the sense of this, makes some less shie of admitting them; but when they tend towards an habitual prevalency, sad are the consequences: Corruptions that were suppos'd extinct, begin to revive, and if care be not taken, will gather strength apace, and cost much trouble and hazard. I believe I speak now to the feeling of many, however, I'm sure to my own.

The sure Method to get rid of these devourers of precious time, which we should esteem as the Blood of our Souls, while it runs wast, is to press continually, as we can, with holy violence, into the secret of God's Presence, in variety of holy Exercises; beseeching him to unite our Hearts in the Fear and Love of his holy Name, to take them into his own Hand, which otherwise diffuse like Water.

When first awake, let us consider who are the Competitors for the first born of

our Thoughts and Affections: God and the World solicit for admittance, and it nearly concerns us, which we first open the Door to. The choice of Friends we now make, bids fair to stick by us the whole Day: What's bad, is as bold to plead Prescription, and keep Possession; and the preference yeilded to our Enemies, provokes our best Friend to retire; we may easily then foresee the success of that Day. O what an affront is this to the Majesty of Heaven, stooping to vile Worms, to repulse his kind offers, and let in Furies, to the infinite hazard of our peace and safety! Shall God solicit us by his holy Spirit, to ask his best Gifts, and be best pleas'd when we ask the greatest with importunity? And shall we, instead of seeking his Face, that we may live for ever, lift our Souls to Vanity, or what's worse? With what disdain should we reject solicitations of this kind, so provoking to him, and detrimental to our best interest? If we have any sense of true honor, gratitude, happiness, how do they all conjure us to care and resolution in this kind?

We are too apt to confine Religion to our Knees; whereas solemn Duties should be look'd upon as preparatives to a heavenly Conversation all the Day long; that we may be always in the fear of God, so in the comforts of his holy Spirit: His Eye is ne'er off us for good; let the Eye of our Souls then be as much as possible fasten'd upon him, who is our Life, and
only

only Happiness. Infinite are the advantages and pleasures of such a converse: To get into the secret of God's presence, and abide there, is a Heaven upon Earth: The happy Souls that know it, know no Words can express it: Nothing are the Charms of this vain flattering World, when they are in the Mount with God; it's then out of their Hearts, and under their Feet, and their Faces shining with Peace and Comfort; by the Light of those heavenly Rays, they behold the World as a dark nothing. Tho' these enjoyments are not constant, but now and then dispensed, to draw us upward; yet the blessed Frames they leave us in, and the strong tendency they impress upon our desires, dispose us much for a close walking with God, in an even course of Communion with him.

Try the force of solemn Meditation; *Monfr. Juri-*
 Occasional Reflections; Self- Examination; *eu's Christi-*
 Learn the Art of spiritualizing Objects, and *in Devotion, I*
 ordinary occurrences; of observing God's *concord with*
 Providences, darting up frequently holy *great delight*
 thoughts by way of Prayer, Praise, and *and advan-*
 Thanksgiving: Strive to habituate this *stage, which*
 course: for though the Heart reluct much *gives a satis-*
 at first, custom renders it familiar, natural, *factory ac-*
 easy, and pleasant. Be sure the opposi- *count of the*
 tion Satan and thy stubborn Will and *the sources of*
 carnal Affections make against these Ex- *In Devotion*
 ercises, evidently declare their usefulness
 and excellency: They are the very Springs
 that feed the spiritual Life; and fit and
 dispose the Soul with cheerfulness to re-
 turn to solemn Duties: To Meditate close
 till

till affections glow, fits greatly for Prayer; this is watching to Prayer, and produces watchfulness in it; and a Soul thus prayerful, will be powerful with God, and against the remains of indwelling Sin: This is the way to pray evermore, *i. e.* to be in a fit temper, and disposition, and readiness, often to perform the Duty. Our Hearts are ready to trifle in every thing, which producing little or no effect, we are ready to entertain low thoughts of these holy Exercises, while the fault is only in our selves; measuring most unreasonably the nature and effects of them, not by what they really are, and actually afford others in their regular use, but by what we make them, by our perverting them. These Duties rightly managed will be found the great secrets of true Christianity.

These are most usefully described by Gurnall in his XIth an armour or Comment on Galatians. one Edition in folio & sells at a high price. another in 2 or 3 pts. 4to. a most excellent & valuable Work for the Comfort of all sincere X^pians. few or none like it.

Take heed of unseasonable good Thoughts: God loves order, and designs not one Ordinance should jostle out another: We can't think even good Motions to come from the Holy Spirit, when they call us off from the Worship we are engag'd in, but rather Satan transform'd into an Angel of Light: These of late, I have found very pressing and ensnaring; they bolt in with strange vivacity in publick Duties. O the infinite danger we are in on all hands! Lord deliver us from these Shafts out of Satan's Quiver, in a heavenly disguise.

once bought for (Title page only want ing) folio for 4 s. & it now sells for 17 s. yet there is a 4to (3 vols) an edition besides.

Rest in no Attainments, but press on towards perfection; grapple with all difficulties in the Strength of Jesus: Labour as much as is possible, to use the World with a holy indifference: Look thro' the mists of time, to things not seen: Carry intentions of God's Glory, and an Eye to the Honor of Religion, thro' all secular Affairs: Receive all the Enjoyments of Sense, as from his Hand, which will dispose to moderation and sobriety, and give a double sweetness to all, as coming from his love; and while we thus taste his Bounty, 'twill be natural for us to indite and live his Praise. Sensuallity is quite opposite to spiritual Joy: *Sensual*, not having the Spirit, as St. Jude says; a Sensual genius, and the Cross of Christ, will ne'er agree: The Apostle puts *Sensual* and *Devilish* together. Certainly Religion requires a greater Mortification to the pleasures of the Palate, than is generally thought: There is a sensuallizing disposition, where there may be little Intemperance as to quantity; much gratifying the Appetite, without Gluttony or Drunkenness: Many are strong to drink Wine without discomposure, who are far from being Innocent; such lose much Peace, and hazard their Souls.

Self-denial is the very Fund of spiritual Comfort: What we refuse the Body, is repay'd to the Soul in Divine Repasts, infinitely more preferable: The pleasures of Sense are soon roll'd over the Tongue, and die away; but a good Conscience is

a continual Feast. We naturally affect superiority over others, but too much neglect the government of our selves, in which consists our safety and happiness: Self-Conquest is most difficult, but most glorious.

Sensual delights, tho' moderate, are not always lawful, when they draw us too much from spiritual Objects, and vitiate spiritual Sensations: Without great care, like Lime-Twigs, they entangle the Soul, and hinder her from aspiring upwards to her proper Element. We may refuse a liquorice Appetite, and yet not starve our Bodies; and study Mortification, without running into conceits of Works of Supererrogation. The Austerities of the Primitive Christians train'd them for bearing the Cross, till superstition, thro' the Wiles of Satan, fasten'd an ill imputation on them, solely owing to their perversion. I doubt not but the Devil made his Earnings of the use of Superstitious rigors, and the neglect of true Discipline, that abuse formed; a Disease very incident to humane Nature.

Pr. 11

O Father of Spirits, help me to bring every Thought and Imagination in subjection to thy Christ: Renew in me a right Spirit, ever aspiring to Thee, the Spring-head of all true delight; assist me in keeping under the Body; spirituallize my Affections: Impress upon my Soul a powerful practick sense of these great Duties, that I may not only know, but do thy Bless-

Blessed Will, and finally by thy Mercy obtain everlasting Life, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* 1

'Tis some Comfort, even under the loss of Comforts, to think those could not be false and imaginary, that are so much out of our Power ; and abate with our failures. What are real, keep pace with Obedience ; what are not, out-run it ; and so many difficulties we meet with to interrupt it, that our Consolations must be variable. God was pleased, under my late droopings, to revive me by considerations of this nature, particularly in reading the latter part of Mr. *Bolton's Directions for Walking with God* : Where he has these expressions. " That very thing which makes
 " many a true hearted Christian doubt of p. 335.
 " himself, and of the soundness of his spi-
 " ritual State, should put him out of all
 " doubt : Even often Exercise with doubts,
 " Temptations, multiply'd attempts against
 " his Faith, pray'd against and oppos'd,
 " with cleaving unto Christ. Doubtless
 " that Faith which is never assaulted with
 " doubting, is but a Fancy : Assuredly
 " that assurance which is ever secure, is
 " but a Dream.

I met with great support likewise from Dr. Sibbs on Canticles, and Mr. Bain's Letters, where are excellent Old Truths. 3
 The reading the Lives of excellent Men, I found gave me a powerful whet under spiritual *Languors*. Greenham, an Ancient but Judicious Author, in the Letters at the end of his Works, gives very conso- 3
 latory

latory Advice to doubting, tempted Christians: He pays every where great deference to the Grace of God, but holds the ballance true, entring smart Caveats against presumption: P. 764. he has this Expresssion: " To leave any good thing " undone, even for a Moment, is contrary " to perseverance. But because the Stile of the Ancients is plain and homely, they are generally neglected; some, as one well expresses it, desiring Gold to be gilded, can't down with Truth but in soft Language: But I bless God heartily for the excellent helps I have had from them.

We should not be dejected, when we find a suspence of former Joy and Comfort, if we persevere in Obedience: While we have the Foundation, and find the superstructure advancing, let us leave these finishing Strokes to the unerring hand of infinite Wisdom and Goodness, who will be sure to time things in Number, Weight, and Measure: When comfort thus comes, 'twill have a double sweetness, as coming in Season, and with God's good Will. It's true, we are bid to *rejoice, and again rejoice*; and the Apostle prays for Joy, as well as Grace, in many places, and no doubt we may for Strength in God's Service, where it's of singular Use: Yet God for wise Reasons often withholds it; to exercise Faith, Humility, and Dependance.

Pride, and fond Conceits of our own Self-sufficiency, stick as close to us as our Natures; which, should they prevail, God knows would undo us: Therefore he often
sub-

subtracts these sweet aids, to let us feel our own weakness, to beat down presumption. When we carry a high Sail of Comfort, if Watchfulness and Humility be not the Ballast, a sudden gust of Temptation may over-set us: God that foresees our dangers, often in kindness with-holds these sweet Breezes, when we have not Skill to trim the Vessel. The Apostle's *Thorn in the Flesh*, seems rather preventive than corrective: To hinder a turgency of Spirit after his Rapture, rather than to prick the bladder of Pride consummated. And if so holy a Person needed it, what can we think of our selves?

As the Exercise of Faith, without comfortable feelings, is often most profitable for us; so it's most pleasing sometimes to God: He expects and delights to be trusted, when Rewards don't immediately follow Work, nay, tho' he seem to frown upon us, and leave us to many hard pulls.

As this is the highest and purest Obedience, so it's infinitely pleasing to him, and in due time will be Crown'd with the most glorious Reward. This trains the Soul to patient waiting on God, Faith grows by Exercise, which exceedingly glorifies him. This therefore is a very safe State, and we should for that Reason, comply with the Dispensation.

" Faith, Dickson on Psal. 116.
 " says one, is our surest holding of God's
 " Blessings, more sure than present Sense,
 " or past Experience, or begun Possessi-
 " on; for all those may be interrupted,
 " and overclouded; but Faith having hold

" on

Eccle. Pol.
p. 552.

“ on God’s Word, holds fast, when all
“ things else fail. The Judicious *Hooker*,
says, “ Too much spiritual Joy,
“ wou’d make us Wantons. Happier a
“ great deal is that Man’s Case, whose
“ Soul by inward desolation is humbled,
“ than he whole Heart is thro’ abundance
“ of spiritual delight lifted up above mea-
“ sure. Better it is sometimes to go down
“ into the Pit with him, who beholding
“ darknes, and bewailing the loss of in-
“ ward Joy and Consolation, crieth from
“ the bottom of the lowest Hell ; My
“ God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken
“ me ! than continually to walk Arm
“ in Arm with Angels, to sit, as it were,
“ in *Abraham’s Bosom*, and to have no
“ thought : But I thank my God, it’s not
“ with me, as it’s with other Men ; no,
“ God will have them, that shall walk in
“ Light, to feel now and then, what it is
“ to sit in the shadow of Death.

The Ways of God *are Pleasantness, and*
his Paths are Peace ; Virtue is its own re-
ward, and Piety will be crown’d with
Joy ; yet some holy Souls spend great
part of their Days in hard Combats, and
some die under a Cloud, without that Joy
and Comfort many Experience : He suf-
fers them to conflict with Winds and
Waves, Devils and Temptations, to the
very Mouth of the Harbour, and all for
wise and holy Reasons ; to brighten their
Crowns, and render them more weighty ;
such hard Exercises encreasing the Faith
and Patience of the Saints ; to teach us en-
tire

tire submission to his Will, when he withholds present retributions; to make us acquiesce in all his Dispensations, and content our selves with glorifying him by any Methods of his choosing, tho' unpleasant to us: And sometimes in judgment to wicked Men, who not profiting by the holy Lives of the Saints, are justly barr'd of advantages by their Death: When pious Men die without Comfort, under Doubts and Fears, bad Men harden themselves in Opinions that undervalue Piety, and confirm them in their evil Courses, especially when they observe wicked Men die stupid, or with flattering hopes.

Strange are the Judgments, shall I call them, or rather the Fancies most Men form of the latter ends of Good and Bad Men. A short, *Lord have Mercy on me*, and a few seeming Penitent expressions, in the opinion of many, wafts the worst to Heaven; tho' all generally proceed from no true sense of Sin, or concern for dishonoring their Maker, but the meer fear of Hell, as is apparent by their returning to Folly upon their Recovery: And sometimes meer stupidity shall entitle them to safety, in some sottish Opinions. I speak not against charitable apprehensions, where there is the least true grounds for it; nor deny Repentance to be the best thing; the worst at any time can set about; or that God does not sometimes surprizingly step in and rescue Souls, even long after the eleventh Hour, even at the

R

last;

last; tho' generally it prove like ordinary Executions, where one is pardon'd, a Hundred die; and if some be reprieved a while, yet after, are led forth to Execution.

*of our Lat-
ter End.*

** and Abp.*

*Usher desired
to die as
Mr Perkins
did, suing
for pardon
of sins of
omission:
& his Grace
actually did
die so.*

N.B.

*I did not im-
mediately ap-
prehend what
follow'd below
concern: the*

*Abp.
when I wrote
this note.*

*Vid Clark's
Lives.*

//

And as ready are the same Persons to censure the Generation of the Righteous, let their Lives be ne'er so holy, if they be but a little over-cast in their last Moments. The Learned, Pious and Laborious Perkins, as Dr. Fuller styles him, dy'd crying for Mercy to God; upon which some immediately censur'd him as Despairing: The Dr. in writing his Life vindicates him. " Sometimes, says he, God seemingly leaves his Saints, when they leave the World, plunging them on their Death-Beds in deep Temptations, and casting their Souls down to Hell, to rebound the higher to Heaven. Besides, the Devil is most busy on the last Day of his Term; and a Tenant to be outed, cares not what mischief he doth. But here was no such matter. Indeed he always cry'd out, Mercy, Mercy, which some standers by misinterpreted for Despair, as if he felt not God's Favour, because he call'd for it: Whereas Mercy is a Grace which they hold the fastest, that most catch after it. The ever memorable Primate, Arch-Bishop Usher, dy'd praying for the Forgiveness of his Sins; and added: " But, Lord, in special forgive my Sins of Omission. Herein he had his wish, which he often us'd; that he might die

as

as Mr. *Perkins*, who expir'd crying for Mercy.

'Tis a blessed State, no doubt, to die with the sweet assurance of God's Love, as it were in the Lap of Blessedness. This, with submission, we may pray for, and shou'd prepare for, by vigorous acts of Faith, close walking with God, abounding in purity of Heart, holiness of Life, and the Fruits of Righteousness; and then supersede our own desires, acquiescing in God's holy Will, as may most subserve his Glory. Then undoubtedly the issue will be glorious; for none can lose by denying themselves for his Honor; and tho' for wise Reasons, God suffer our Sun to set in a Cloud, 'twill rise with the more Radiancy. Who can die better or safer, than in asking Mercy and Forgiveness? And if such great, holy, indefatigable Souls die thus, and are so affected with their Sins of Omission, what Care and Humility does this teach us; who trifle away so many blessed Seasons, and too little regard our Omissions? Lord, if it be thus done to the green Tree, what shall become of the dry?

O fit us all for our latter end, stand by us in the Hour and Article of Death, that we fall not from Thee and our Stedfastness, thro' the prevalency of any Temptation: Grant thy unworthy Servant a peculiar return of this Prayer in his greatest distress, which he earnestly desires may ever come up in Remembrance before Thee. And help us all in the time of

Pr.
ll
suiting
our dying
moments,
or provision
for them.

this Mortal Life, to hang a Stock of ardent Prayers upon the File, which God may remember and answer in this our extremity: O stand by us in our dying Agonies, who art our only Strength, in the great and last assaults of the Powers of Darkness; and if it be thy Will, give an abundant entrance into thy reviving Presence: So forward us by thy continual aids, that we living the Life of the Righteous, may have our end like theirs, full of Peace and assurance for ever: But if our Death must be full of conflict and desertion, as our Sins deserve, and thy Glory may require; teach us to acquiesce, and meekly accept the punishment of our faults, and with holy trust, to cleave close to thy pretious Christ, and gracious Promises, for his sake. *Amen.*

L Our great danger is any unmortify'd Lust, least any Root of bitterness spring in our Souls to trouble our Peace living or dying; which may cause us justly to call in question our Sincerity. Should our pretended Comforts grow with these cursed Weeds, 'twould be the forest Judgment on this side Hell; for they keep us in the very Suburbs of it. If we spare our Sins, the time is coming, that God and Conscience will not spare us: Let us then be persuaded by all that's dear to us, to sacrifice these darlings. Should God suffer us to build high on so rotten a Foundation, 'twould make our fall the greater: Let us resolutely then lay the Ax to the Root of the Tree, and after that, strive

to

to stub up every Fibre of Iniquity : When thus the rubbish is removed, and the ground clear'd, let us Build and Plant afresh, begging the help and showers of Heaven; so when the Winds blow, and Waves beat, our Fabrick will stand, and our Plantation yeild us Fruit in due Season ; as *Trees planted by the Rivers of Water, whose Leaves shall not wither, and their Fruit shall prosper* : Our Profession shall not be tarnish'd, and we shall tast the delicious Fruits of Paradise.

Assurance is very rare ; and what comes and is kept easily is suspicious. 'Tis not for a poor, vile, despicable Worm, newly drag'd up from the Gates of the Grave and Hell, to pretend to so great a Favour, 'tis a vast one he is not free among Dead and lost ; but God forbid he should nullifie or depretiate Divine Gifts, or seem to envy and malign any holy, happy Souls, blessed with this Heaven upon Earth. God for wise Reasons often denies it the Strong, and indulges the Weak with it, as appears in the course of his Providence. 'Tis usually for great Services in Life, or for a glorious blessed Death, to encourage others : 'Tis fallacy and delusion then, for the lazy, carnal and secure, to pretend to it : But tho' Dreamers think themselves awake, yet such, I hope, as really are, may know it, and will not easily be perswaded they do but Dream. Let the Men of Parts and Learning try their Talent, and see if they can persuade such out of their Senses : There is a Spiritual Sensation, as well as

White-
stone.

Hickman.
I have
read it
lately, &
find it a
book very
valuable
& written
with pro-
found
sense
& under-
standing.
A small
book for
size.

* This
Life or dy-
ing history,
I have want-
ed much to
get, but know
not how.

Clark's Ex-
ampl. p. 174.
Vol. 2.

a Natural, and such as are under the true Power of it, will as soon renounce the one as the other. Such as read the ingenious *Culvermell*, will see the Reasons why this Doctrine is exploded, and what's the proper use of it, &c. And such as peruse a Book entitled *The Office of the Spirit to Believers*, will find it as useful, as 'tis scarce, if they would feel the practick part, and the consolations which attend it, wherein consists the chief Excellency of the Principles of Christianity.

It seems to be the great design of the Epistle of St. *John* to prove it; that we might know we have eternal Life; and are pass'd from Death to Life. And we have Instances in the Martyrs, and many others. I shall mention but one, that of *Mr. Peacock*, Tutor to some young Gentlemen at Oxford, who fell into deep desertion and terrible Temptations on his Death-Bed; but after desperate Conflicts, and many desponding Expressions, at length recovering a composed Mind, address'd himself to his Pupils, and all about him, in the following Terms: "Live in God's Fear, that you may die in his Favour, otherwise the Ox and Ass will condemn you: And three Hours before his Death, he thus express'd himself. *Quid de salute meâ sentiam, expectatis explicari? usq; adeo indulget Deus eis, quos semel dilexerit, ut eos nunquam deserat; atq; ideo in cœlos me transiturum pro certo habeo: felicissima sunt ea vincula, in quibus me confixit Deus meus benignissimus.* "Do you expect to know
" what


23

" what I think of my Salvation? So very
 " indulgent is God, to those he once loves, ①
 " that he ne'er forsakes them; and there-
 " fore I'm sure I'm going to Heaven:
 " Most happy were those Bands my most
 " gracious God tied me with,

The Pious and Learned *Mede* tells us, Disc. 53. p.
 " There is but one thing in the World 303.
 " can make this miserable Life happy unto
 " us, and that is, so to demean our selves *Against*
 " while we live here, as that we may be *the wick-*
 " assured of the Life to come. He that *ed doc-*
 " walks in the ways of God, and makes *p. 309. mine*
 " Conscience to keep his Commands, may *of Prede-*
 " hereby infallibly know, he knows Christ, *-tination.*
 " that his Faith is a true Faith, and that
 " he shall be saved everlastingly. The
 " Reason is plain; good Works are
 " the fruit of Faith, and a godly Con-
 " versation is the Work of God's holy
 " Spirit. Whoever Christ accepts as a Ser-
 " vant, he gives the Token of his Spirit,
 " the Grace which enlivens and quickens
 " the Heart and Will to his Service. As
 " the Heat of Fire warms all near it, so
 " the Spirit of Christ kindles this Grace
 " in every Heart that Faith links to him:
 " The Fruit whereof is that infallible Li-
 " very, whereby every one that wears it, may
 " know himself to be his Servant. He
 " that hath this evidence, may dare the
 " Devil to his Face: He that hath this,
 " hath the broad Seal of Eternal Life, and
 " such a Man shall live for ever. But as
 this excellent Author lays the true ground-
 work of Assurance, so he consults professed-

ly for the infirmities of the weak in this particular.

Some have taught that Assurance was of the Essence of Faith; and have suppos'd such deep degrees of Humiliation, and some strange qualifications necessary for obtaining a saving interest in Jesus Christ, as have troubled the Spirits of the strongest Christians, and sorely wounded the weak: This may be seen at large in Sil. Firmin's Real Christian, a Book worth the Reading on this and many other occasions. He there gives an Instance of a very good Man, who afflicted many by the severity of his Doctrines, whom God seem'd very much to leave in the dark, when he approach'd his End. Tho' these harsh Opinions seem now fallen asleep, yet some there are, that still much afflict the sincere, but weak: There are Babes in Christ, that have need of Milk, as well as the strong and full grown that can bear strong Meat.

 While true Grace is maintain'd absolutely to consist not in kind, but degree, Ezek. 13.22. the Hearts of many may be made sad God would not have made so: There certainly is great danger of this, as well as of strengthening the Hands of the Wicked. A State of Perfection is certainly most safe and pleasant, and he that does not heartily aspire after it, has just Reason to call in question his sincerity: But God forbid any should, for want of Caution, be wounded in the House of their Friends. There are bruised Reeds and smoking Flax, as well as Cedars, and burning, shining

shining Lights : Weaklings are peculiarly entitled to our Lord's care, and God despises not the Day of small things ; shall Man then ? Shall he that stands in so much need of Mercy, as the best do, be severe ? Let it be remember'd ; to the Merciful, God will shew himself Merciful, &c. All must allow there is a time when Grace is low and weak, scarce discernible ; and is it not torment enough to a sincere Soul, to find it self so Weak, its State disputable, but new Burthens must be impos'd to press it lower ? Shall the Physician turn Executioner ? Is there not an Hour of Darknes, Temptation, Conflict, when Devils and Corruption are let loose ? And must a poor Soul, now ready to sink with its own weight, have new ones hung about it ? while he sees flaws in his best Duties and Services, somewhat to provoke, and nothing to atone, and holiness, to the grief of his Heart, advance but slowly. The compassionate Jesus threatens very severely such as offend his little ones ; and tho' the menace seem discharg'd against wicked Men, yet if good Men transgress in this kind, by needless Severities, God may repay them in their own Coin : Let such as value their own Peace and others, be cautious.

'Tis the operative Faith that is justifying, and the more it abounds in good Works, the clearer are our hopes. The Promises run to Faith and Obedience, as the Veins and Arteries do over the whole Body ; and as Spirits, Life and Vigor, are maintain'd there, by due Circulation ; so is
it

it in the Soul and spiritual Life ; the reciprocal actings of Faith and Obedience, breed a strong athletick Christian, full of Peace and Activity : But as a Sick or Weak Man, is still a Man and alive ; so is a feeble Saint, a real Saint, tho' under infirmities, and he ought to have the Comfort of it ; and since with great difficulty he takes it, let all be cautious how they hinder him.

As few enjoy the blessed assurance of God's Love, so such as have it, have it not always, nor alike at all times, as Bishop Hopkins well observes. Ebbs and flows will happen, Clouds and Sun-shine will variably overspread the Soul, as they do the Face of the Heavens. 'Tis a mighty Favour when God speaks Peace to a guilty Soul ; but how does the Obligation redouble its force to gratitude and all suitable expressions, when he says to the Soul but once in this Life ; *I am thy Salvation, thy exceeding great Reward?* sealing it up to the Day of Redemption ; God's Spirit witnessing with it, that it is his.

“ That Love naturally follows a sense of forgiveness of Sins, appears by the *Parable Luk. 6. 41, 42.* upon which case our Saviour made this question, *Which of them would love him most?* He supposeth both the Debtors will love him, because the Creditor forgave them both ; and he collecteth the degrees of Love will answer proportionably to the quantity of the Debt forgiven.

What

Bp. Pearson
on the Creed,
p. 369, and
370.

What excites our Love to God, quickens our Obedience and Zeal in doing and suffering for him, and what does it more, than the sense of his, manifested to our Souls? All therefore to whom God's Glory and Mens Welfare are endear'd, shou'd be cautious how they promote any discouragements obstructive of such noble Enterprises. 'Tis not warrantable to vacate or enervate any Doctrine, because it has been abused sometimes to ill purposes, upon which very deplorable effects have follow'd, while sufficient guard might be provided against the abuse of it by any honest Heart. Holy Souls are so concern'd for Purity, Mens Salvation, and God's Honor, that they look shie on any thing, which, thro' the prevalency of Mens Corruptions, seems to have the least tendency to turn *the Grace of God into Wantonness*; but when they have done their best, they'll find it difficult, if not impossible, to set any thing out of the reach of Hypocrites, but they'll pretend to it, and labour to pervert it. What supports holy Souls in sharp Conflicts in Life and Death, especially when violent and torturing, but these Blessed Forecasts and Assurances? Can we think that nothing, or small, which has prov'd such a mighty stay to the Spirits of so many excellent Persons in their darkest Minutes, whom, in the Judgment of Charity, we can't but think are gone to their Eternal Rest? Let us take heed least our slighty Opinions provoke God to leave us destitute of those vast Favours, which a
 serious

serious Hour may make us value at another rate.

As neglect of any of God's Favours may prejudice our Comforts, so trusting to the best things he has not bid us, may prove very dangerous. Holiness and good Works are excellent things; the one must be very amiable in God's Sight, as he can't but love and delight in his own likeness; and the other must be very acceptable to him, as they are agreeable to his Will and Commands: But when once they become the Objects of our Trust and Confidence, and we begin to Pride our selves in them, as the matter of our dependance, to recommend us to the Divine acceptance, we ought to grow jealous of our selves, least we trust to a broken Reed. God will be honor'd in ways of his own appointment: His Will is the measure of Perfection; whatever semblances therefore of Goodness appear in things to our views, nay, tho' they really are so in their very nature, and some of the best too; yet if we neglect to observe his determinations, or oppose his Pleasure reveal'd to us, he'll look upon us as bold Invaders of his rightful Prerogative, and what we do, as the result of self-will, and treat us accordingly. God, by the universal Tenor of his holy Gospel, seems mostly bent upon honoring the riches and freedom of his Grace and Mercy, and the Merits and Satisfaction of his Blessed Son in our Salvation. If we miss his design here, we fail in a great Point.

— God's

" God's design in the Covenant of Grace, *Dr. Sibb's*
 " is to exalt the Riches of his Mercy, a- *Preface to the*
 " bove all Sin and unworthiness of Men; *Soul's conflict,*
 " and we yeild him more Glory by Be-
 " lieving, than it would be to his Ju-
 " stice to destroy us. If we were Per-
 " fect in our selves, we should not Ho-
 " nor him so much as when we labour to
 " be found in Christ, having his Righte-
 " ousness upon us. Some who have laugh'd
 at their Fellow-Travellers cautious Prepa-
 rations for foul weather in Sun-shine, have
 been convinc'd of their Prudence when they
 saw the Storm coming. Many abounding
 in the sense of the sufficiency of their own
 Righteousness, who in Health and Pro-
 sperity ridicul'd such as made better pre-
 parations, have yet, at the decline of the
 Day, when they saw the Clouds gathering,
 acknowledg'd their mistake, and taken
 Sanctuary in the very thing they befool'd.
 Believe it, Death and Judgment will be
 found solemn Things, and trying Seasons;
 when Eternity shall face us, and we be-
 gin to interfere with the strange world of
 Spirits, and approach his enlighten'd Tri-
 bunal, whose Eyes are as a Flame of Fire,
 and can't behold the least impurity:
 then it's possible our Stomachs may come
 down, and we be contented to accept
 of what will fully cover our Blemishes
 and Nakedness, and skreen us from the
 exquisite searches of infinite Purity. Then
 perhaps with the stiff Cardinal, who liv-
 ing contended so much for dependance on
 good works, we may be perswaded to ac-
 cept

cept of what his Confession dying declar'd to be *Tutissimum*, most safe to trust to Christ alone.

*In Heirvey in
his Letters says
this was his
only Support
in all sickness
& trials what
ever.*

Look back to the End of the best Men, and observe strictly and impartially what they most repos'd their confidence in, in their dying Agonies, and you'll find it was Jesus Christ only. Persons on the confines

of both Worlds, usually make the truest estimates of things; and remember with great seriousness, that shortly the experiment must be your own; think now closely, what may be the surest center of your Repose: Expect an awaken'd Conscience to be more severe in its scrutiny, and Satan ready to back it with Fury, as his last onset for the Mastery: Consider well what is most likely to bear the Test then, and support under that rude shock, the

* *What have we to boast of, when all the Righteousness of our Works is none of ours, but Christ's imputed to us; whereby only, and not for any Merit in themselves, they become acceptable, and have promise of Reward?* last and fiercest Assault of the Powers of Darkness: Know no Man can suffer for the Exercise of his Humility, but may for his Presumption: Trust the weight of Eternity, upon what you may most safely: Remember, if there be any worth in your good * Works, the best of which are full of flaws, you shall not lose one grain, in the repute of a just God, for modestly declining them: Count all therefore with the holy Apostle, *but as dross and dung that you may be found in Christ, &c.* In the interim know, that to abound in works of Piety and Charity, and yet renounce Self-righteousness, is truer, harder Self-denial, than all the Austerities of Monke-

ry.

ry. The judicious *Hooker* in his Discourse *Eccles. Polit.* of Justification, tells us: " There are two *p. 520. p.*

" kinds of Christian Righteousness; the *514. p. 515.*

" one without us, which we have by im-

" putation; the other in us, which con-

" sists of Faith, Hope and Charity, and o-

" ther Christian Virtues. The little Fruit

" we have in Holiness, it is, God knows,

" corrupt and unsound: We put no con-

" fidence at all in it, we challenge no-

" thing in the World for it. Cut off all

" those things wherein we have regard-

" ed our own glory, those things Men do

" to please Men, and to satisfy their own

" liking, those things we do for any by

" respect, not sincerely and purely for

" the Love of God; and a small score will

" serve for the number of our righteous

" deeds. Let such as repute this Doctrine

so very ridiculous; consult fairly a Book

entitled, *Salvation by Jesus Christ alone*; and *Staynoe in 2*

they'll find there is more than they are *vol. 8vo.*

readily aware of to be said, even for the

Rationale of the thing, which most of all

disgusts them.

'Tis a mighty support to a Christian

under his Conflicts, Temptations, Infirmi-

ties, and subsequent doubts and fears, to

reflect with hope upon the soundness of his

Conversion. I need not mention the ma-

nny blessed encouragements God's holy

Word gives him: Any who are conver-

sant therein, know how to apply the Con-

solation it affords on this occasion: And

such as neglect it, or superficially study it,

deserve that darkness which must neces-

sarily

*The Com-
fort of
Sound
Conversion.*

farily hang upon their Minds, and that fear and perplexity, which is its just consequence and recompence. I know something of the Arguments bandy'd to and fro on this Subject, and how the Learned World is still divided about it. But after all, I must own, I conceive a humble encouraging hope in God's mighty Grace and Mercy from this very consideration, under all my doubts and fears, which my many infirmities naturally suggest to me; since while they are heartily bewail'd, and faithfully strove against, I may depend upon God's acceptance, who is pleas'd with such as hope in his Mercy, and dare trust to his Promises in the way of Duty, even while hard beset with difficulties: This is a proper season for the vigorous exercise of Faith, which is infinitely pleasing to God; to see us resolutely combat all opposition, and hope, as it were, against hope; and tho' he shou'd slay us, yet still to put our trust in him: As sure as God is true, such Souls shall ne'er finally be ashamed nor confounded. Let such as value the Judgment of Great and Learned Men, consult at leisure the judicious *Hooker* and Dr. *Lightfoot*, what they say in this great Point of Perseverance: Which the first of them calls a question of Moment, and says, "the repose of infinite Souls depends upon it; the matter is weighty, dear, and pretious. If it be as natural (as I think it is) for a New-Born Child of Grace, to call upon God in Prayer, as 'tis for the New-Born Infant to cry: then what the Learned

Dr.

Eccles. Polit.

p. 552.

*Lightf. p.*1150. *Vol. 2.*


Dr. Cudworth says in his excellent Dis-^{Serm. i. from} course, is very comfortable and encourag-^{p. 137, 20 p.} ing to an upright Soul. These excellent ^{143.} Persons give us all reasonable hopes we can desire; and can an honest Heart ask more? They liv'd what they taught, and none more cry'd up Purity, Watchfulness, and Caution. As for the insincere, let them patch up their hopes with what false Peace and Comforts they can get, which may last for a time; but let them rest assured the Day is coming, they shall pass away as a Snail which melteth. But let not any humble honest Heart disquiet it self by needless doubts and scruples it's but too ready to entertain: Its very concern least it shou'd be insincere affords it the Comfort, that it earnestly affects sincerity, and is a good Proof it is so far really poss-^{proof of} est of it, as the degrees of its desires ad-^{Sincerity.} vance; at the least are a blessed earnest of it. 'Tis the fearless and the careless, the secure and confident, that are in greatest danger; who are ever boasting of their Attainments, soaring aloft in their Altitudes, bragging how they live in the Circle of Light and Comfort continually, without a Sigh or Groan, or any depression of Spirit, or visible expression of Humility, or complaint against Corruptions; who are big of a Tympany, bloated with Pride and Conceit, and despise their weak Brethren, looking upon them with disdain, as grovelling Earth-Worms that can't aspire upward, reputing themselves the only Proficients. I wish such would remember
S that

that the great Apostle exhorts us to be cloth'd with Humility: For God resisteth the Proud; and gives Grace to the Humble. 1 Pet. 5. 5.

And how very idle that Men shou'd fall out about what none of them understand?

Bonnell's

Life, p. 177.

sincere Desires;  their value

Princes maintain their Sovereignty, and have their *Arcana Imperii*, and grow jealous and displeas'd with such as question the one, or that presume to dive into the other. Who then can safely meddle with the Prerogative of an infinite Majesty; or pry into his secret Decrees; or say he has none? Sure it's condescension enough, that he has told us our Names are in the Book of Life, if his Laws are written in our Hearts, and copied out in our Lives, tending his Word and Spirit to effect it, if we will but sincerely ask and improve the means; and not wilfully Register our Names in the black Records of Hell. What do we get by glaring on the Sun, but Blindness? by looking down into great Deep, but giddiness and instability? Our Duty is plain, and God is more willing to save us, than we are to be saved; which he demonstrates by bringing the terms as low as possible, even to sincere desires, which naturally express themselves in congruous efforts. Do we think to be saved against our Wills? and made happy against our Inclinations? What is Heaven, but the fruition of the ever Blessed God? And is that possible, till our Wills and Affections embrace him? Let us have done then with all bold conclusions about the great Jehovah and his Operations, and take heed how we peep within the Curtains of his purposes,

purposes, lest we be overwhelm'd with Majesty, and increate Light break out upon us, and at once dazzle and confound us. Did we study to know our selves better, we shou'd him, to the greatest advantage; this wou'd teach us to keep our distance, and ply our Duty, and nothing more capacitates us for Heavens Secrets. Humility and Obedience enlarge the Soul to be the more susceptible of divine Favours. Low Grounds and Valleys partake most liberally of Heaven's Dews and Blessings, while lofty Mountains remain dry and barren.

After all, if we can't agree upon some abstruser Points, nor reconcile some places of Scripture so as perfectly to acquiesce in some disputable Opinions, yet let us in what's easy and plain, which may afford us great satisfaction, tho' not so full, it may be, as we cou'd wish. The sense that divine Wisdom and Goodness thinks fit to leave us somewhat in the Dark in some Cases, shou'd make us more inquisitive what may be his Design in it, than too nicely to discuss Points his Providence seems to draw a Vail over. This wou'd instruct us in the great Lessons of Humility, Charity, Patience and Forbearance: Vast wou'd be our acquisitions this way, and we shou'd find our selves in the truest way to Heaven by these Exercises, and God in due time revealing all saving knowledge to us; and what can we desire more? And this we may depend upon, since

Psal. 25. 9. since God has promised to *guide the Meek, and teach them his way.* But Pride and Contention usually go together, and naturally raise a dust, which conceals Truth, and God often judicially punishes one Error with another. He has made practical Truths so plain, that nothing but affected ignorance can keep them from our views ; and if we suffer our Passions to force us over these obligations, can we think he will Reward our disobedience with true Knowledge ?

Wou'd we finally persevere, and be as-
sur'd of our Salvation, let us vigorously
pursue the Method the Apostle prescribes,
and ne'er doubt of a full attainment ? (*2 Pet.*
chap. 1. v. 5, to the end of the 12th.)
Wou'd we endeavour to live as holily as
if we expected to be justifi'd by our own
Works, then think and say, as we indeed
really are, and the Scriptures teach us, af-
Luk. 17. 10. *ter all, but unprofitable Servants ? putting*
our sole confidence in Jesus Christ, we
① *need not doubt of God's acceptance.* Wou'd
we know whether we are of that Blessed
number for whom our dearest Lord is
gone before to prepare Mansions of Glory ?
Let us follow the advice insinuated by *St. Peter,*
viz. to study and apply the exceeding great
2 Pet. 1. 4. *and precious Promises* of the Gospel, till
we are made partakers of the Divine Na-
ture, and then we need not question our
interest in them. Where Men are care-
less of these Apostolick Directions, it's a
sad sign matters are not right with them,
whatever they pretend. But would we
sincere-

sincerely make these our great scope and end, and where we differ'd in any thing, strive to maintain *servent Charity*, which the Apostle recommends to us above all things, we shou'd soon feel the Blessings which attend this heavenly temper here, in a composure in part of our unhappy differences and divisions; and what God suffer'd to remain to exercise our Graces, and excite our Grief, Prayers and endeavours to redress, we shou'd see at length issuing in his greater Glory, and our own Advantage.

Some account, I believe, might be given of the discrepance of Mens Opinions, from the variety of their Constitutions, courses of Life, and of God's Providential dealings with them. Such as are most broken with legal terrors, after much Guilt and strong Convictions, are most apt to admire the free, preventing Grace and Mercy of God, when he brings them to themselves, and acquaintance with him. Such as have strong Corruptions to grapple with, wonder most at his rich forbearance, and are most conscious of their own inabilities. And such as go with full Sail to Heaven, under a strong and abiding sense of God's Love, are most taken up with admiring thoughts of their own unworthiness, and the freedom of his Favours. On the other hand, such as lead more Moral Lives, without any great awakenings of Conscience, from a sense of grosser Guilt, are apter to be more self-opiniative, and

trust more to their own strength and performances, and can't so readily own some favours of Heaven, it's possible they never tasted, and it may be, think they better deserv'd than such as pretend to them.

But after all, to our greater Humiliation, we are all too prone to missive the very Principles we espouse. So much corruption as remains in the best, so much aptitude is there to offend our glorious Master; let our Opinions be what they will: A consideration very useful and instructive, were it attended to as it shou'd, to make us less affect the Study of thorny Controversies, dry Notions and Speculations, and more the great Duty of Mortification, where we are sure to find our Earnings. Whether we make God or our selves most our dependance, we are still ready to fall into great failures when we come to action.

Phil. 2. 12,
13.

If we say we can do nothing without God's Grace, why don't we take the advice of the Holy-Ghost? *To work out our own Salvation with fear and trembling: For it is God which worketh in us both to will and to do of his good Pleasure.* If we think all so much in our own Power, why don't we abound more in good Works? Don't our doing so little, upbraid our own concessions? How prone are we absolutely to appropriate that to him or our selves, which he expressly tells us is some way a social Work? *What God joins together, let no Man put asunder.* I'm afraid, nay, I think

think I may be confident, that the best Man breathing, every Day, more or less, in some degree, abuses his avow'd Principles, let his dependance be where it will. Why else does he not pray and live better? As I'm confident he would, were he sure this Day was his last. Let us then affect Modesty, Moderation and Charity, as we hope for Mercy at the Hands of God.

Men may talk as big as they please of the powers of Nature, yet Scripture and sad Experience evidence it to be very dark and perverse, while unassisted by divine Grace. 'Tis God's holy Spirit that brings the Soul out of that Chaos of ignorance and confusion it naturally lies in: He begins, carries on, and finishes the great Work of our spiritual Renovation. He rolls away the Mists of Darkness from our Understandings, and keeps them from returning, which otherwise recur as naturally as Mists do in the Air in which we breath: He bends the Iron sinew of the Will, and prevents it from returning to the natural and habitual posture it once had, when set upon mischief, and departure from God: He refines our earthly Affections, and keeps them aloft, which have as natural a tendency to this World, as a Cloud cast into the Air has to the Earth its Centre. In few Words, he is that secret Magnetism of Heaven, that draws us upwards, and not the spring of our own activity, which moves us to-
 Alioquin quod est in seipso, et non in deo.

wards God, as a Watch moves without its Master-Spring.

But still all must, and do agree, that Men act not like Puppets only when they are mov'd, but have spritely Powers for Action, tho' much perverted by ill customs. As depraved as we are, we naturally desire happiness, tho' we mistake the way to it. A meer natural Man can descry the Charms of Moral Virtue, admire and effect it, as many Heathens have; but without a peculiar divine assistance he can't come up to that purity of Heart and Sanctity of Life, from a right Principle and to a right End God requires, and that qualifies for Communion with him and fruition of him. But a true Christian has an infus'd Principle that capacitates him for higher attainments, and is therefore bid to stir up the Gifts and Graces bestow'd upon him; *to grow in Grace, and crucifie the Flesh with its Affections and Lusts.* Wou'd infinite Wisdom and Goodness put a Creature upon impracticable Duties, and command impossibilities? Let us not deceive our selves, and charge God foolishly; he is no hard Master, to reap where he has not sow'd. Does he listen to the Cries of natural instinct, and feed the Ravens when they cry for Hunger? And do we think he wont hear the Prayer of his Children? If we wont allow God has oblig'd himself by Promise to answer the Prayer of a natural Man, which some Texts seem to favour; yet the Love of God, which is his Nature, encourages us to hope he will,

as well as some Precedents of his Grace and Favour: however, we are sure the Promise runs full and strong to the faithful in Covenant with him: *Ask, and ye shall receive: To him that has and improves, more shall be given.* The best must own they might do more good than they do, and the worst that they might avoid much Sin they do not: A thought that shou'd make us adore the Divine Mercy, and hate our base, sinful selves. No Doctrines are to be admitted that cast the least Reflexion on the Divine Perfections or Procedures: Whoever are sav'd, shall acknowledge Eternal Life to be the Gift of God; and whoever are lost, shall own Eternal Death to be the just Wages of their Sin: Men perish not so much for want of means, but for contempt or neglect of what they have. However Men load one another's Opinions, and too often even the ever Blessed God, with strange invidious consequences, yet the Day is coming which will clear up his Mercy, Justice, Truth and Faithfulness, as the Light at Noon-day, and leave all Men inexcusable.

How happy had it been for some Men, had they spent that time in living, they spent in needless disputing: Let us be warn'd by their Miscarriages, be up and doing, and we shall feel God gracious, and know that which all our vain jangling would ne'er make us understand: Experience will afford such an Idea of divine Truths, that all our airy Notions cou'd not give

us so much as the semblance of; while we really feel our selves wasted apace towards the Shoar of Eternal Bliss, we shall find our Souls possess already of some part of it.

Holy Souls of very different Sentiments on Earth, I'm satisfi'd, are now warbling their Hallelujahs about the Throne of the All-glorious Jesus, with continual Harmony. 'Tis pity they agreed not better here, tho' in the main, no doubt, they did, who are all as one there. Wou'd the State of Heaven admit of shame and concern, some there, it's possible, wou'd be put to the Blush for these their lesser Follies here on Earth, as conscious they sought too much themselves and Humours in them, and too little the Glory of God, which now appears to them to be the great All in all. Let us think so frequently and seriously of that Blessed State of perfect Unity above, and the danger we are in from the common Enemy here, whose main Stratagem is to divide; the more easily to destroy; till we cultivate a more healing Spirit, which uniting us one to another by the Exercise of Charity, may dispose us for closer Union with God, so enable us to break the strong Legions of Hell, our great and common Interest.

Where we differ, let us with the same freedom give that liberty to others, we take our selves. It neither comports with Gentility, Ingenuity, nor Christianity, to be hide-bound in this matter: It looks little, and betokens a narrow contracted Spirit:

rit: It makes a Man appear arrogant and assuming; Vice degrades the Soul, but especially Pride and Conceit. God dispenses his Gifts variously, and Nature sports her self in a grateful variety: Men are of different Tempers and Inclinations, and receive different Educations and infusions of Principles: God very variously casts their Lot, and treats them not alike in his Providence: Some consult their Reason most, others their Experience:

These and many other circumstances occasion them to form very different Judgments of things suitable to their impressions; and we must allow them to obey their Convictions, and be govern'd by Conscience, since *what is not of Faith, is Sin*; and God may have wise Ends to bring to pass by this very Method, what we can't dive into, nor so much as imagine: I speak still of lesser differences. If we will approve our selves then to be real Christians, let us not think our selves left at liberty in this point, but oblig'd by the indispensable Law of Charity: Let not a difference in Perswasion alienate or abate Affection; a Man of common candour must be asham'd of it in cool Thoughts.

Above all, let us beware of any Principles that strike at the Vitals of Religion, that oppose purity of Heart, and holiness of Life, the grand design of the Gospel. Some have discours'd as tho' they had ne'er read or understood the Scriptures, or rather, as if their great design in reading them, had been to pervert them. Let

us keep to the Form of sound Words, and as we love God and our Souls, let us avoid all expressions that but border on Blasphemy or Prophanity, or have but the least shadow or semblance of them: Let us away with the vain pretences of good meanings in them, while they smell so strong of Affectation and Singularity, and bring many ignorant People into strange Misconceits, and dangerous Errors and mistakes.

May the Doctrines of Free-Grace be urg'd with a strict guard and due caution, and what any way opposes or enervates them, with a tender regard to weak and doubting Christians: The present Peace and eternal Welfare of many Souls lies at stake: A consideration which shou'd conjure all to great Care and Tendernefs, to lay aside the force of Prejudices from Party, Education, and private Passions. He that studies, and upon good grounds can apply the Promises of the Gospel to himself, will yet find need to urge his Heart to meditate Terror sometimes, and rejoice with trembling. God threatens Hell to drive us to Heaven: Nothing he prescribes us shall be in vain, if we don't neglect or pervert his gracious design in it: Hopes and Fears are the Soul's Sinews for action, and a great part of Christian skill consists in an alternative application of suitable Objects at proper Seasons. The Honey-comb may be pleasing to Nature, but too great Indulgences may prove injurious, and breed a Surfeit: Variety, we say,
makes

makes a Feast : Sweets and Acids are as agreeable to the Appetite interchangably, and no Man cares to make a Meal only of Sauce. Let Nature then instruct us in the right use of the Methods of divine Grace, and reconcile us to God's severer Methods in some State of our Souls, as a part of that kind dispensation. His Providence allots us Prosperity and Adversity very variously ; our Souls and Bodies need Purgatives, as well as Restoratives, and we find the advantages of Health, more than recompensing the bitterness of a Position, or the uneasiness of its Operation.

Such as decry serious awakening Discourses, as legal Preaching ; and stop their own and others Ears against the Threats and Terrors of the Law, admitting of no searching, trying Truths, but the pleasant sound of the Promises ; that cry up the power and freedom of Divine Grace, and pardoning Mercy, the Excellency and All-sufficiency of the Mediator's Righteousness, to the detriment or neglect of Industry, Holiness, and good Works, will, I fear, have a sad account to make one day, whatever they pretend now. He that knows not his Disease and danger, will ne'er heartily seek or value a Remedy : The Law is as true a Glass to shew us our Spots, deformity and misery, as the Gospel is our sure guide to the only Remedy. Is it a small privilege to receive the Divine Image, to partake of qualifications, that fit us for the Vision of the ever Blessed God, and eternal happiness ? To a-
bound

bound in the Fruits of Righteousness, which will turn to our everlasting account, and have an abundant recompence of Reward? Don't Christ and his Apostles urge us to aspire towards Perfection? *To be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect; to perfect Holiness in God's fear?* And can we think our selves sincere, if we don't aim and endeavour after it, tho' we can't absolutely attain it here? What does our glorious Lord inculcate more, in some of his last dying Words, than Prayer, Obedience, *and bringing forth of much fruit?* The last of which, he makes the very Livery of his Disciples: And can we expect the Benefit of his blessed Prayer that follows, without these Marks of our discipleship? O what a heavenly treasure of

John 14,

15, 16, 17.

Instruction do those four Chapters comprise! What divine Consolations do they Breath! How infinitely indebted are we to the Lord of Life and Glory, for his Prayer on Earth, and Intercession in Heaven! Methinks we should delight to dwell upon them, while we have Hearts to conceive, admire, love and praise him.

Wo be to that Man one day, that dares turn the Grace of God into Wantonness, and sin because it abounds: that hardens his Heart because God *wants to be gracious*; how will his Fury smoke against him that *despises the treasures of his Goodness and his Patience*, that runs into *longsufferance*? How will it rest upon him, that after his *impenitent Heart*, thus treasures up Wrath against

gainst the Day of Wrath? Men may soften matters to themselves and others, and cover all with plausible pretexts, which one Day will drop like Leaves in Autumn. Behold! all you that kindle a Fire, *Isai. 50. 11.* that compass yourselves about with Sparks: Walk in the Light of your Fire, and in the Sparks you have kindled. This shall you have of mine Hand, says God by the Prophet, you shall lie down in Sorrow. Let us not sport our selves in our own deceivings, nor promise our selves Peace, while we walk in the imagination of our Hearts. God forgive us our offences of this kind, and keep us from this horrid abuse of his Mercy.

It's possible I may incur the fate of such as attempt to part Men in a Fray, to please none, but get blows from all; but if truth be on my side, with sincere intentions for God's Glory, I'm sure to please him, which will afford me the highest satisfaction. Some may repute this a needless digression, very improper to mingle with the present subject: If such please to look back, they'll find these things fell in my way: But had the matter been otherwise, Gratitude wou'd make that natural, which Order might seem to forbid. *The Ox knows his Owner, and the Ass his Master's Crib.* I had been more brutish than either, had I not said the little I have in Honor of the free Grace of God, to which I'm so infinitely beholden. Charming is Truth to an enlighten'd Mind, but

orthodoxy it self will do us little Service; without a suitable Practice; an ill Life is one of the greatest Errors, as it's opposite to sincerity of Heart, which is our Evangelick Perfection. " For misapprehension, God doth grant allowance, " and dispenses with humane frailties; " but for failing of Intention, there is " no dispensation. Fail here, and you " are Hypocrites; and therefore uprightness is our Perfection: He is upright " that means well, tho' he be in many " things mistaken, and incumber'd with " weakness. Therefore it becomes us to be " highly Charitable one towards another, " since God is so gracious, and sets such a " value upon our good meanings and " sincere intentions, as to account of this " for Righteousness, either in Practice or " Opinion.

To love one because he is of our Way and Opinion, is like loving a Man's Dress, more than his Person, and expresses the truest love of our Selves and Humors; as sure as loving a pious Man differing in judgment from us in some things, is a lively expression of our Love to goodness, and therein of our Love to God. And who but an errant Bigott cou'd content himself with any thing short of this comfortable symptom of his sincerity? *If we give our Bodies to be burnt, and have not Charity, it profits us not: Our best deeds without it, will prove but the Varnish of Hypocrisie, which when the Sun of Righteousness shall melt down by the brightness of his*

Dr. Whitch-
cor, Vol. 1.
Disc. 4.

his coming, will but render our natural complexion the more ugly and hateful. Let us all then strive to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace; to be of the same Mind; and where we are so unhappy as to differ, still let us *love as Brethren*, and be sure that affection which unites us to God, unites us to one another.

“ **A**lmighty God, who seest that we
 “ have no power of our selves, to
 “ help our selves, we humbly beseech
 “ Thee, that as by thy special Grace preventing us, Thou dost put into our
 “ Minds good desires, so by thy continual help we may bring the same to
 “ good effect. And because the frailty of
 “ Man without Thee cannot but fall, keep
 “ us ever by Thy help, from all things
 “ hurtful, and lead us to all things profitable to our Salvation; and grant us
 “ so to be join’d together in Unity of
 “ Spirit, that we may be made a holy
 “ Temple, acceptable to Thee, through
 “ *Jesus Christ* our Lord, who liveth and
 “ reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost,
 “ one God World without end. *Amen.* //

The Strength and Skill of a Christian, lies very much in the avoiding carefully the Occasions and first Beginnings of Temptation. Grace in the Habit may fall asleep without Care and Exercise; The weak Saint stands his ground when upon his Guard, while the mighty one falls under

der a fit of security and presumption: This difference appears sometimes in the same Person, at different Seasons, as in the Case of St. Peter; while under the Power of Self confidence, who spake bigger, and promised fairer, and fell more shamefully? And after his fall had awaken'd his Caution and rouz'd up his Courage, who more bold and brave, who more stanch and resolute? He that trembled at the Voice of a Damsel, maintains his Master's Cause undauntedly in the Face of his powerful Murtherers. Job made a Covenant with his Eyes, and so preserv'd his Purity, while the Man after God's own Heart letting his rove at all adventures, fell into Adultery and Murther, wilfully and deliberately.

There's no greater Wisdom than well to time the beginning of things. Dangers are no more light, if they once seem so; and more dangers have deceived Men than forc'd them. Lord Verul. Essays,
p. 78.

How apt are we to think our Work is done when it's but begun? How ready to sit down and enjoy the Fruits of our first Successes, till we find the Enemy has rally'd, and returns to a fresh Encounter? When we have conquer'd great Dangers, we are prone to despise lesser; but the Moment we do so, they are no longer such to us; for security will soon alter their Property. Great difficulties don't prejudice us so much, when we are upon our guard, as little ones that surprize us: They gradually gather strength, and steal upon us without observation, till they suddenly overwhelm us. *There is a Rest remaining for the People of God*; but they'll be mistaken if they expect it here: They must stand ready for the Combat while they

they are on this Stage of Temptations; When they have conquer'd one, *Hydra* like, another springs up: O what need have we then of Patience, as well as Vigilance, while Corruptions and Temptations are continually teizing and worrying us, that having done all, we may stand? Patience seems the greater part of fortitude: A Man may bear bravely great Torture for a while, that may sink under far less of long continuance: Yet this long Trial is often the State of a Christian, to whom strong Corruptions are more terrible than Death, it being like chaining the Living to the Dead, and length still adds strength. 'Tis highly useful to train our selves to Discipline and Self-denial in lesser matters, that with more facility we may handle our Weapons on greater Occasions. The Mastery of the Will, is the great thing in Conversion; and the more we subdue it, the nearer we advance to perfection. Incredible will be the advantage if we keep a strict Hand upon it, in lawful and indifferent matters. I urge this the more, from a sense of the ill consequences of my own failures in this kind. And I beseech Almighty God to humble, pardon and help me under these defects, that after the receipt of such mighty Favours, I shou'd exert no more gratitude: With shame do I acknowledge it to the glory of his Patience and rich forbearance.

Perfection certainly we should all drive at, and be groaning against the sad remains of this Body of Sin and Death, crying with the Apostle, *O wretched Men that we are, who shall deliver us?* and for this end, may desire *to be dissolv'd and be with Christ, which is far better*; not only as it's a State of Glory, but of freedom from Sin. Exemption from Misery, and the attainment of Happiness, are the Voice of Nature; but delivery from Sin, and desires after perfect Purity, are the proper Language of Grace. Scripture and Experience declare there are no absolute attainments of Perfection to be made here. 'Tis a State of Trial and Conflict, to exercise Faith and Patience, infinitely pleasing to God. We are but too prone, God knows, to be proud of the poor proficiency we make, and shou'd we not have some dead Weight left, to depress and humble us, we shou'd be in danger of soaring into the Altitude of spiritual Pride, which wou'd fill us with elated apprehensions of our selves, and contempt of others. It can't, I think, be prov'd, that the blessed Spirit of God subdues corruption absolutely and entirely in any, in this Mortal State, but that the Leprosie does still more or less cleave to the Walls of the House while standing.

Pride was the Sin of Devils, God most abhors: The Naturalist says, Corruption of the best things is the worst; so may the Divine: When we grow Proud of Virtue, that base Vice, like the Philoso-

• phers-

phers-Stone said to transmute all into Gold it touches, transmutes all it mingles with into abominable Poison, and the best things into the worst. Never was blessed *Job* more lovely in the Eye of Heaven, than when under the Exercise of his Humility and Patience, abhorring himself in *Dust and Ashes*. What is Man, says *Job* 15. *Eliphaz*, that he shou'd be clean? and he which is Born of a Woman, that he shou'd be Righteous? Behold he puts no trust in his Saints, yea the Heavens are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is Man, which drinketh iniquity like Water? Behold he puts no trust in his Servants; and *Job* 4. 12. his Angels he chargeth with Folly. The top and quintessence of Nature, even Angelick purity, loses its lustre when compar'd with what's infinite and increate. Therefore says *Job* himself, Tho' I were Righteous, yet wou'd I not answer, but I wou'd make supplication to my Judge. *Job* 9. If I justifie my self, my own Mouth shall condemn me: If I say, I am Perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. Tho' I were Perfect, yet wou'd I not know my Soul: I wou'd despise my Life. These are some of the Rhetorical expressions of *Job* and his Friend on this Subject, which teach us glorious Truths, and the profoundest Reverence and Respect to the most Holy God, even to a real contempt, and as it were a nullifying of our mean, sinful selves.

Let not one Syllable here said, be misapplied, as insinuating any thing to the prejudice of Holiness, the best thing we

can aim at on this side Heaven, that so much glorifies God, and is one of the first rudiments of our blessedness and glory. No, in God's Name and Strength, let us strive to outstrip the sanctity of *Job*, *Noah*, and *Daniel*; but then let us be sure to keep our Humility: Let us desire, pray and endeavour *to perfect Holiness in God's fear*; but then let us still remember God and our wretched Selves: How after all our refining, there's still Dross enough left for the Eye of his Purity to fasten upon, and devour us; that *if he shou'd be extream to mark what's amiss, in his sight no Flesh living shou'd be justifi'd*. In short, as he can ne'er be upright, who does not pant and aspire after Perfection; so he that attains the highest pitch here, tho' absolutely he can none, yet if he retain not his Humility, he can't hold his Integrity.

// If we mourn over our Corruptions, hate them, and heartily pray and watch against them, they may trouble, but will not ruine us: They may be as Thorns in our Flesh, to prick and pain us, like the *Canaanites*, not destroy'd all at once, but left to exercise our Humility and Dependance: So our Falls may prove our Rise; our Weakness, our Strength; our Sorrows, finally our Joys. Not that there is any natural tendency in them to such blessed effects; but it is perfectly owing to the admirable Wisdom, Power and Goodness of a gracious God, who can bring Good out of Evil, Light out of Darkness; out
of

of our Weakness, greater Confusion to our Enemies ; and out of all, the Triumphs of his Glory, and our Happiness, thro' the Might and Merits of Jesus Christ, our Blessed Lord, to whom be Glory for ever.

Let us not then be discourag'd, but resist Sin and Satan, tho' we get our ground by Inches. We are ne'er conquer'd till we throw down our Weapons ; Heaven peculiarly Favours the Bold and Resolute : Tho' by the fury of an onset we be beaten from our Post, let us retire Fighting, and our retreat will be commendable, till we return with reinforcements to the Combat. *Above all, let us take the Shield of Faith*, by which Christian Heroes in all Ages have done wonders ; Armour of Proof against all the Legions of Hell and Earth, when they join Issue ; he that has this, will ne'er be vanquish'd. This supplies the part of a Prospective, whereby we see more for us, than against us ; a sight that animates the Soul to brave Encounters : As this thrives, every Grace does, and corruption languishes : By this we see our Help, and feel our Strength, even Christ our Advocate above in Glory, at the Right Hand of the Majesty on high, with the Keys of Hell and Death in his Hand, who has all Power in Heaven and Earth. He dwells likewise in our Hearts by Faith, and is in us the hope of Glory, by the energy of his Holy Spirit : We do believe, Lord increase our Faith : By this we may look upon the remains of Corruption, not as the forerunner of a

Rout, but the Van of a glorious Victory.

And this indeed is the Root of my hopes ; for I find still many difficulties to grapple with, and fierce opposition ; that I must have many a tug with a vain, wicked Heart, and the Prince of Darknes. I Pray, Read, and Fight, and yet am often beaten ; my Comfort is, I don't quite leave the Field, but rally and return to the charge.

O my Soul, since thou art in so much danger, as there are Lusts remaining unmortifi'd, let it be thy daily care to crucify them all, that the Body of Sin and Death may be daily dying : Let thy Peace and Hopes ne'er out-run the Execution of thy Lusts ; their Death is the Life of thy Soul and all its blessed hopes. As thy Zeal against Sin flags, let no rotten Prop support them ; let them droop as they ought, that the want of them may rouse thee up to aspire by all means to thy first Love and Works.

As Pride and Security advance, there must needs be a decline of all regular hopes and comforts : *God resists the Proud*, and above all, spiritual Pride, most odious in his Sight. God often suffers his to tumble into the Dirt, tho' he let them not lie there, to humble them, when they begin to entertain over-weening thoughts of themselves, and begin to settle on their Lees.

The

The wainings of Comfort, and the sproutings of Corruptions, rouze, humble and quicken sincere Souls, and often make them fear a declension, the high way to Apostacy. A true Christian is ever a growing one, but not always alike, nor in the Exercise of the same Graces: Some may seem at a stand, while others thrive; but whoever grows in Humility, tho' he seem to grow downwards in other respects, has yet the truest growth in Grace: For this is like the Tap-Root of a Tree, that keeps it steady and firm in all Storms; and like the spreading of its Roots, whereby the Tree becomes more luxuriant and fruitful. A real declension manifests a defect of the vital Union, whatever semblances to the contrary appear: This manifestly brings a Man into hazard of being a withered Branch, whose fate is to be cast into the Fire.

Union is the Foundation of Communion: This Christ intimates *John 15.* the withering Branch there is describ'd to have some kind of Union, but it's defective; something hinders the flow of the Sap and Spirit of the Vine from distilling into it: The true Branch is purg'd to greater fructification, which is made there the grand Characteristick of the true vital Union, the real saving abiding in Christ: To this abiding in him, is ascrib'd the abiding of his Words in us; to which is subjoin'd a most glorious Promise of asking what we will, and it shall be done unto us, Verse the 7th. We are told *Heb.*

3. 14. *We are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end.* As this evidenceth Perseverance to be the surest proof of our being in Christ, so as to partake of all his saving benefits; so our real Union with Christ, when the bright Symptoms of it appear, may afford us blessed grounds of hope that we shall hold out and persevere unto the end: That because *he lives, we shall live also.* *They that are Christs, have Crucifi'd the Flesh, with its Affections and Lusts,* Gal. 5. 24. What shall we think then of such, or what can they think of themselves, who are neither under the power of Vivification nor Mortification? who tell us plainly, they are the People of God, who sees no sin in his. What a wretched fallacy do such put upon themselves? Feeling shortly will convince them of their egregious folly and stupidity. This is like the dreaming Whim of immortalizing Faith, some fondly suppose will fence against a natural Death, tho' better Believers than they that maintain the Hypothesis, every day tumble into the Grave before their Faces. *Deut. 32. 19.* and *Psal. 106. 40.* We are told, *when the Lord saw the Wickedness of his People, he abhorr'd his own inheritance.* Amos. 3. 2. Says the Lord to his People: *You only have I known of all the Families of the Earth: therefore will I punish you for all your Iniquities.* God sees Sin wherever it is, and hates it, but most of all in his own Children, whom he chastens, *that they might not be condemn'd*

with

with the World, 1 Cor. 11. 32. Whoever consults the *Chapter* and *Psalms* just cited, will see how quick-sighted God is of the Sins of his, how his Wrath and Jealousie smok'd against them: And indeed, the whole Scripture proclaims Sorrows and Sufferings awaiting the best of Men, and all Ages have made it to appear real fact; and not only for Trial, but for their Sins. Good God! to what degeneracy is thy Creature obnoxious, who in the Face of thy Word, &c. can fall into such infatuation!

Some say, God ne'er deserts a Soul but for Sin; others again, that he does, for very great and glorious Purposes. 'Tis not our wisdom to be positive of things dubious, nor to confine the Almighty, where he has left himself at liberty. The best have Sin enough to vindicate the Justice of a desertion; and tho' God may in such a Case have no particular quarrel against us, yet it may be profitable and safe for us, to lay it ever at the door of our Sin, as it may keep us humble, and prevent hard Thoughts of God. On the other hand, we see *Job* was deserted for Trial only, as we may suppose many since, without any peculiar Controversy more than ordinary, between God and such Souls.

We have seen the end of the Lord, that he is Jam. 5. 11. *very pitiful, and of tender Mercy; and that he blesses the latter end of such more than their beginning,* Job 42. 12. These desertions, like misty Mornings, have ended in a glorious

glorious Sun-shine of most radiant Grace and Comfort.

Let us then entirely give up our selves
 ① to divine Conduct in the way of Duty, who will ever repay our Faith and Patience with double interest; whose very Nature is goodness, and waits only the fittest seasons to be communicative; who is readier to impart his best Gifts, than we to ask for receive them; who is readier to communicate his benign, reviving influences, to qualify'd Subjects, than the Sun appearing in his utmost Splendor is to dispense his Light and Heat. Nay, let us go farther still, tho' we think not the Consolations of the Almighty small, but infinitely valuable, yet let us content our selves with his most kind, wise Dispensations, begging to be kept from Sin, and in our Love to God, tho' he conceal his from us; that his *Grace may be sufficient for us*, to support us under the Buffetings of Satan, and prickings of the *Thorn in the Flesh*. I found great comfort in Reading *Rous's Mystick Marriage*, and *Symonds of Desertion*; where much of the ends of Desertion are treated of in the former; and the difference between that and a real declension, with many other useful things, in the latter.

Some are apt to Idolize Comfort, and grow peevish; ready to shake off the Yoke if they have it not; and grow weary of waiting for the Lord any longer; a perverse dangerous Temper. Jesus Christ will be an inexhaustible spring of Comfort to his, first

or last, but we must give him leave to time it. What an Idol, says Dr. *Harris*, See his *Life* do some make of Comfort, as if it were by Clark, p: their Christ? The difference is not great, 324, and whether it come at Death, or an Hour af- 325, ter, since it would come assuredly. Some again lose their Comforts, by nourishing too great scrupulosity, as others by contracting carelesness, and hardness of Heart: Fearfulness and security, equally invite the cruel Enemy to insult us. But if we miss or lose our Comforts, if it be not remarkably thro' our own default and disobedience, we must acquiesce in the Pleasure of God, till the blessed Day dawn. If we study and understand the Covenant of Grace, and are but sincere, 'twill give us quietness under all our Infirmities, and establishment, tho' Comforts flow not in upon us.

Some may mistake the abatement of Comfort, for an absolute removal; nay, it's possible it may be the same, and yet some may mistrust the loss of it, at least a great declension of it: For when long enjoy'd, it makes not that impression it did at first, especially if they came out of great Darkeness; for then it's like standing in the open Sun coming out of a Dungeon, which makes the change very impressive: But after a long and habitual Sun-shine, tho' the sweet and benign Influences are just the same, yet use and time abate gradually the transports of the Sensation. Thus they may think they are much of the losing hand, when it's just the

the same. I derogate not in the least designedly from the excellency of divine Gifts, by any comparisons of this Nature; nor in the least to prejudice God's Prerogative.

But, O my Soul, hast thou not sinn'd away thine, which is much worse than a simple removal? How unworthily hast thou improv'd the Showers and Sun-shine of Heaven, the Frowns and Smiles, the various Culture of thy blessed Master? His very Anger was from Love, his sharpest Scourges to whip thee home, and prevent thy tumbling into the bottomless gulph of Perdition. When kindest treatment won thee not, what a merciful severity was it, to scare thee out of the Chains of Hell? After all these mighty Obligations, and thy own eager Resolutions and generous Purposes, how miserably hast thou fail'd and drop'd short? Oh how strong were the impressions of Love and eternal Gratitude, with full Self-dedication in the Hours of Distress, upon Presumption of Deliverance? But how shamefully have all those warm fits languish'd, even to half expiring? The ever blessed and glorious Sun of Righteousness dawn'd upon thee in the very shades of Death and Hell, like the Morning Light spread upon the Mountains, more and more till perfect Day. The Twilight then surpriz'd thee, even the first step of hope from the bottomless Pit of infernal Horror; but as the Day advanc'd, how didst thou bask in those refreshing Beams?

What

What a Heaven upon Earth was it to feel thy self ascending from the Suburbs of Hell, the very abysses of Despair? But when thou felt, as it were, Heaven descending to meet thee half way, was thou not transported as if thou wert there? How didst thou exult and triumph in the blessed God, and his sweet Jesus? In his most amazing Pity, and surprizing Mercy? And can all this so soon, so very soon, be forgot? If the Charms of the richest Goodness don't stick by thee, yet how canst thou shake off the remembrance of so dreadful a Misery? Misery, that stuck once so close to thee, as to appear a part of thy very Constitution, into which it seem'd woven: Oh reflect and be humble: See what an impotent Wretch thou art, while a little left to thy self: Should God now quite leave thee, as thou deservest, how wouldst thou languish into Formality, and negligence, even to perfect Libertinism? Be zealous then, O my Soul, and repent, beg God's Holy Spirit incessantly. Grant it my dearest Jesus. *Amen.*

Lord! what a wretched Creature is poor Man, in the least left to himself! How soon does he dwindle in his good Intentions, and forget the awful Terrors of thy Majesty, and sense of thy intolerable Wrath; his own infinite hazard, Interest and Duty; together with the exceeding greatness of thy ineffable Mercy; tho' all this once affected him with the quickest pungency! Lord pardon and restore me
to

to the Light of thy blisful Countenance, for thy most free Mercies sake in Jesu, my most adorable Saviour.

As the neglect and abuse of the holy Sacrament, had no small hand in my Sins, and their just punishment, so I shall end with that blessed Ordinance.

Tho' I had some ease before I ventured on so great a Duty, some composure of Mind being necessary, yet I had no comfort till after that Performance. It pleased God, after some sollicitations of my Friends, to encline my Heart to this glorious Feast of Love. In the Morning I arose in some disorder, but his kind Providence cast a Sermon in my way, which he made strangely encouraging to me; for ever blessed be his holy Name. I went forth after it, with a cheerful Spirit, and from that very Season the Day clear'd up; and I have ever since continued it, without the least return of Horror, to my inconceivable advantage: And I think I may be bold to say, without vanity, to the exceeding great glory of his most free Grace, without the least shadow of any desert in me, but quite the contrary, that I ne'er since went to that holy Table, but I felt a very remarkable assistance; not so much in Flights of Joy, as in a peculiar consistence of Spirit, and a fix'd steddiness of Mind, with clearness of Thought, great Serenity and Composure, with little or no Distraction; which tho' it haunt me too much in other Duties, yet, which is remarkable, very rarely in this. Some fiery shafts Sa-

tan

tan has spent upon me at this season from his quiver; but God help'd me immediately to quench and repel them. I wish I could say my attainments after it were suitable; but here, thro' carelesness, I have sadly come short, to my shame.

I mention this to give my All-glorious God the Praise of all entirely; to encourage drooping, desponding Spirits, to hasten to this blessed Feast of *Fat things, and Wine upon the Lees well refined*: This Bread of Life, and Wine of the Kingdom, contriv'd by the Lord of Life and Glory, to satisfy hungry Souls; to strengthen and revive the weak and weary; to keep and encrease Spirit and Vigor in the strong.

Let no sincere Heart be dejected, that feels not that presence of Mind and freedom of Spirit, God in his overflowing bounty bless'd me with: For as I have great reason to adore him in the distribution of the least spiritual favour, (tho' this I dare not but esteem as a very great one) yet have I reason to blush in confusion, that my after Successes are no greater, more answerable to such Indulgencies. Measure therefore the benefit of this Ordinance, by the true Measure of the Sanctuary; and value an encrease of Spiritual Strength the better to resist or conquer a stubborn Temptation, or Corruption; or to walk more closely and evenly with God, than present Transports and Extasies: Nay, tho' Clouds and Darkness enwrap thee, yet hold on resolutely, and the Day's thy own finally.

The Devil, I know, abuses many, urging the Impenitent to come out of false Ends and base Designs; to stop the Clamours of Conscience; to gain repute or qualifications; and some are so stupid, as to think it works like a Charm, and content themselves with meer Formalities. Others again, Humble, Holy Souls, he scares from it, as tho' it was rather *Moses* than the Lord's Table, as one well Phrases it. Of both these, he makes his Earnings; the one, he wraps up in security, and exposes to God's fearful Judgments; the other he torments, if he cannot ruin them; and keeps them in a starving Condition, cheating them out of many spiritual Enjoyments. God stoops the lowest to us in this Ordinance of any; if we Sign and Seal faithfully his Covenant, he will Seal us by his Spirit to the Day of Redemption; and ratifie in Heaven, what we do on Earth: But Wo to them that reject and despise this condescension of the Almighty, and the Blood of his Son, as all do more or less, that neglect or trifle in this Ordinance, or comply with it, for some Carnal, Base, Selfish end. *Many are Sick and Weak*, and others fall *asleep* for abusing it now, as well as formerly; be sure hardness of Heart and other spiritual Judgments attend it, which are much worse.

{ Hales on the
Sacrament,
p. 61.

A very memorable Author tells us:
 " The Uses and Ends of the Lord's-Sup-
 " per, can be no more than such as are
 " mention'd in the Scriptures, and they
 " are but Two. 1. The Commemorati-
 " on

" on of the Death and Passion of the Son
 " of God, speci'd by himself at the Institu-
 " tion of the Ceremony. 2. To testifie
 " our Union with Christ, and Commu-
 " nion one with another; which end St.
 " Paul hath taught us.

Now when we have so solemn an Insti-
 tution calculated to such blessed purposes;
 if we have any suitable and becoming ap-
 prehensions of the worth and dignity of
 our Saviour; of his most transcendent and
 amazing Love, and God's kind designs to-
 wards us, issuing as much in our good, as
 his glory; how can we so easily dispense
 with neglects of this kind? Are we not
 in more danger of dishonoring God by
 Contempt or Disregard of any of his San-
 ctions, than by any expressions of concern-
 we can regularly pretend to honor Him
 with, by compliance with the rest? E-
 specially if they be of a very important
 nature, expressive of most kind Intentions,
 and vast Condescension?

Some holy Souls are discourag'd by too
 needless scrupulosity; but I fear much worse
 lies at the bottom of most Mens neglect.
 Shou'd such be call'd to great Privileges
 and Dignities by great Men on Earth, we
 shou'd scarce find them so full of affected
 Modesty in pretences of unworthiness. In
 Cases of secular Advantage and Prefer-
 ment, Men are counted more nice than
 wise, when they refuse a good offer, and
 seem very loth to complement themselves
 into such inconveniencies, as Self-denial in
 such Cases bring with it. Who plead their

*It is asto-
 nishing to
 think that
 the Quakers
 will so qui-
 etly rob them-
 selves of the
 benefit of
 this ordi-
 nance in y^e
 absolute
 neglect & con-
 tempt of it.
 J. A.*

Unworthiness, as a Reason for non-acceptance of Places of Wealth and Honor, unless it be thought a pretty device to usher in the Favours with more security? And who sticks at Pains and Care to fit and qualify himself for a good Office? Wou'd Men apply closely these considerations to their Spiritual concerns, and dive deeply into their deceitful Hearts, to take a narrow view of the Springs of Action in those weighty Matters, they might discover the rotten Principles that lurk there, the true Cause of all Self-flattery and frivolous Excuses, of that treachery and falsity, that neither God nor Conscience will long take at their Hands. Had Men but half the Faith and Love for God, his Ordinances, and another World, they have for this; the far greatest part of their pretences of this kind; wou'd sink and disappear.

Vid. Dr. Horneck of Consideration.

Inconsideration is the Root of this great mischief, and truly of every thing detrimental to our Souls: The Misery that attends it, and the benefits that manifestly follow thoughtfulness, shou'd recommend the Duty to all.

This wou'd gradually dispose the Soul to a habit of pleasant Meditation, the Experience whereof wou'd recommend its excellent usefulness, the force of which none can imagine that have not try'd it.

Ep. Hall of Meditation, p. 114.

“ Unto this only neglect, let me ascribe
 “ the commonness of that *Laodicean* temper of Men; and that dead coldness
 “ which has stricken the Hearts of many,
 “ having

“ having left them nothing but the Bo-
 “ dies of Men, and the Visors of Christi-
 “ ans ; to this only they have not Me-
 “ ditated. It is not more possible to live
 “ without a Heart, than to be devout
 “ without Meditation. Let him Curse me
 “ on his Death-Bed that plies this Duty,
 “ if he acknowledge not these Hours
 “ placed the most happily in his whole
 “ Life ; if he then wish not he had worn
 “ out more Days in so profitable and hea-
 “ venly a Work.

God now cast me upon a Bed of dan-
 gerous Sicknefs, and then I felt the Blef-
 sed advantages of this holy Ordinance. I
 receiv'd the Sentence of Death in my self,
 but God kept my Spirit pacate and re-
 sign'd : and had he not, as circumstan-
 ces then stood, what I apprehended, I
 think must inevitably have come to pass. All
 my Fear is, that I kept my Eye too much
 fix'd on the poor little I had done, which
 I desire may ever be entirely fasten'd on
 my dear Saviour. I did not then call for
 the Sacrament in a hurry, as I have known
 some, that wou'd not be perswaded to take
 it sooner ; tho' if God please to give me
 opportunity, I desire to make it the last
 and solemn act of my Life. We shou'd
 use all precaution, that we act not our last
 part indecently, or in a disconsolate hurry,
 which shou'd be Consecrated more imme-
 diately to the Glory of God and the cre-
 dit of Religion : and the surest way to at-
 tain this, is early to consecrate our Lives
 to him in the ways of his own appoint-
 ment ;

Mr. Boyl.

ment ; For he has promised *to Honor them that Honor him* ; and in what can we do it more, than in reverencing and complying with his Institutions ? Let us remember, that time will put all our best Antidotes to the Trial ; for as one well says ; “ Tho’
 “ a Good Man will not fear to die, yet
 “ he may to be let into Eternity. After my Recovery, I read St. *Austin’s* Meditations with great delight : And found a strange reinforcement of my Faith, in reading Dr. *Parkers* Law of Nature : Books in their different kind very excellent. But to Thee, O Lord, be entirely ascrib’d the Glory of all the Success I felt.

Let such as will not take pains to prepare for the Sacrament, or endeavour that strictness of Life which shou’d follow it, consider how dearly they love, and one day must pay for their Lusts ; how they despise the great Salvation. Let such as feel Terrors in the discharge of their Duty in this kind, examine, whether some unrepented of, or allow’d Sin, be not the Cause of it. I seldom went without some dread, while matters were at this pass with me. I know Satan’s wicked Arts are numberless ; he may abuse an honest Heart, under indisposition of Body, and so hope to discourage the sincere : But usually in such Cases, in the use of Means, God speaks Peace to such ; let none then be discourag’d, but resolutely hold on in the Strength of Jesus Christ.

May

May holy timorous Souls, that stand off out of a sense of their unworthiness, assume Courage, and know that Humility, express'd in Self-judging, and Self-abhorrence, is one of the best Preparatives for this Love-Feast: That the Flesh and Blood of Christ, is the best Antidote against the remains of Corruption, and the best means to make them as good as they desire to be; and till they comply, ne'er let them expect it, nor true comfort; for God will have his Ordinance honor'd.

I have known some measure their safety by their peace, and attribute their Peace to their being of a Party, with no concern express'd about principles: Others again, have desisted from going to the Sacrament, because they went with some Terror, but met with some quiet in the forbearance. Wou'd such consider, that the Means Men of any Persuasion use must be effectual to a sound Conversion, or there can be no Salvation; that there's a false Peace, as well as a true: And that to trust to what God lays no stress upon, and decline a plain Duty, is no way to a true one, they might soon see thro' the Delusion: Wou'd such as find ease in the neglect of the Sacrament, resolutely return to their Duty, the Enemy, it's probable, would oppose them fiercely, but that Terror would end in Comfort after a struggle; whereas if upon a neglect there may be some quiet, it only forebodes a Storm gathering apace, tho' the Signs of it appear not.

May such, as after a Storm have gain'd Peace, ne'er be prodigal of it, but by all means, endeavour to maintain Humility and Watchfulness, and live in the constant use of this blessed Ordinance. So much Corruption as remains, (as some there is in the best) so much hazard there is of growing secure, and losing what we enjoy, and then, it may be, double diligence will not recover it.

Let such of us as do attend this glorious Feast of Love, bless God heartily for Opportunities and Dispositions of this kind; and labour to improve them by frequent and more careful approaches. Let us gird up the Loins of our Mind, and the whole Armor of God, closer about us, and dread the Thoughts of appearing without the Wedding Garment, *viz.* Faith and Love in some Exercise. Here we may behold Sin in its true Nature, and most affecting Colours; what treatment we might expect at God's Hand, had not his blessed Son been treated so severely for our sakes: What vast hopes we may entertain of the greatest Favours imaginable, after such full satisfaction offer'd and accepted, if we will but lay fast hold of our own Mercies. And a due sense of these matters can't fail to humble us, and endear the blessed Jesus to us; and while we are most depress'd with self-loathing and abhorrence of Sin, we shall feel our Hearts most free and dilated in Praise. And after such blessed Movements of Soul, we can't well fail of suitable Zeal, and holy Emulation
in

in our Lives and Conversations. The sense of what we have done, felt and enjoy'd, will strangely inspirit our Devotions, and they again enliven our Actions, till the happy and repeated Vicissitudes bring us into the blessed Circle of Eternal Praises, and boundless, endless Fruitions.

We can't have a more noble Subject of Praise, nor a fitter occasion to solemnize it powerfully and connaturally, than when our awful serious deportment, our eager, earnest expressions of devotions, excite and inflame one another mutually at these blessed Seasons. And if we get Life and Heat for Action, and more vital Communion with God in private, by some quickning spark darted from his Altar, how nobly will all our Pains and Care be recompenc'd? Indevotion turns the best thing in the World into the worst; Truth and Sincerity into Lying and Hypocrisie. If our Hearts are mended in this respect, let us think it a vast attainment, and those excellent means, that promote it.

And when we reflect on these occasions, upon such an amazing Instance of Divine Love and Charity, what narrow contracted Spirit; what frozen Heart, can hold out against the power of its Charms? Will it not kindly thaw and expand itself while it approaches so near the holy Fire of Divine Love? Will not those sacred Flames pervade the Breast, and enkindle some rapturous Passion, that shall diffuse it self with heavenly ardency over the whole Soul? Loveliness display'd attracts

tracts Love and Admiration; but when Love express'd at so costly a rate, in the bitterest dying Agonies, concurs, and all to gain our Affections, is it possible for any to remain senseless and obdurate? Can we see God part with his only Son! in pity to obstinate Rebels and haters of him? And him so freely parting with his precious Life for his Enemies and Persecutors, and not find enlarg'd Bowels to all, and a readiness to forgive the greatest Injuries and Affronts? Shall we have the Heart to appear niggardly and parsimonious in our Offerings, while we expect the greatest Blessings, and commemorate the highest act of Bounty? So provoke God to withhold the Treasures of his Mercy he was just pouring in upon us, and good Men to upbraid us with Covetousness? What folly, and stupid ingratitude must Men be guilty of, before they can give any just occasions of complaint in this kind?

See Rp. Patrick's *Mensa Mystica*.

Thus have I ventur'd to relate that part of my Life, most are shie of communicating. The Royal Prophet says; *Come and hear all you that Fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my Soul*: To stir up others to Praise God, and strengthen their Faith and trust in him. This, I hope, has been my Design, and where I have fail'd, I beseech the good Lord to pardon the frailties of his Servant.

I will

“ I Will extol Thee, O Lord, for Thou
 “ hast lifted me up, and hast not made
 “ my Enemies to rejoice over me. I am
 “ afflicted and ready to die from my Youth
 “ up: While I suffer thy Terrors I am
 “ distracted. Thy fierce Wrath went o-
 “ ver me, thy Terrors have cut me off:
 “ They came round about me daily like
 “ Water, they compassed me about to-
 “ gether: Thou hast laid me in the low-
 “ est Pit, in darkness in the Deeps: Thy
 “ Wrath lay hard upon me, and Thou
 “ hast afflicted me with all thy Waves.
 “ My Lovers and my Friends stood a-
 “ loof from my Sore, and my Kinf-
 “ men stood afar off. Thy Arrows stuck
 “ fast in me, and thy Hand pressed me
 “ fore: There was no soundness in my
 “ Flesh because of thine Anger: Neither
 “ was there any rest in my Bones, because
 “ of my Sin: My Confusion was ever be-
 “ fore me: I was fore broken, and roared by
 “ reason of the disquietness of my Heart:
 “ My Life drew nigh unto the Grave: I
 “ was counted with them that go down in-
 “ to the Pit. In these distresses I lifted
 “ up my Soul to Thee, and Thou hast re-
 “ joiced the Soul of thy Servant, delivering
 “ it from the lowest Hell: For Thou art
 “ great and dost wondrous things, Thou
 “ art God alone. Thou hast brought me
 “ out of a horrible Pit, and set my Feet
 “ on a Rock, and establish’d my Goings,
 “ and put a new Song in my Mouth, e-
 “ ven Praise unto our God: Many shall
 “ see

“ see it, and fear, and shall trust in the
 “ Lord: Blessed is that Man that makes
 “ Thee his trust, and respecteth not such
 “ as turn aside to Lies. I have declared
 “ thy Faithfulness, O Lord, and thy Sal-
 “ vation: I have not concealed thy lov-
 “ ing kindness and thy Truth. With-
 “ hold not Thou thy tender Mercies from
 “ me, O Lord: let thy Loving-kindness
 “ and thy Truth continually preserve me:
 “ In Thee, O Lord, I trust, let me never
 “ be put to Confusion. Let them be con-
 “ founded that seek after my Soul to de-
 “ stroy it. Let all those that seek Thee,
 “ rejoyce and be glad in Thee; let such
 “ as Love thy Salvation, say continually,
 “ the Lord be Magnified. In my Affli-
 “ ction, I said in my hast all Men were
 “ Liars, that God had forgotten me, and
 “ shut out my Prayer, and cast me off ut-
 “ terly. And in my Prosperity I said, I
 “ shall ne’er be moved. Lord, by thy fa-
 “ vour Thou hast made my Mountain to
 “ stand strong. Thou didst hide thy Face,
 “ and I was tronbled. I’m poor and need-
 “ dy, Lord think upon me: Thou art my
 “ help and my deliverer, make no tar-
 “ rying, O my God. Turn my Mourn-
 “ ing into Rejoicing, and once more gird
 “ me with Gladness; To the end that
 “ my Glory may sing Praise to Thee and
 “ not be silent. O Lord my God, I will
 “ give Thanks unto Thee for ever.

u.

I long since intended this, but still from
 time to time deferr’d it; till a particular
 Provi-

Providence made me forthwith set about it. And all I can say for it, is, that I beg'd God's assistance, and hope have had it, in bringing many Passages to Mind; and that I have related all as near matter of fact, as I could. I have met with some discouragements, and peculiar Temptations in the writing of it, but God has carry'd me through. I conclude therefore with Praise to the Almighty, for the wonders of his Love to me ever of old; for his aids and assistance in this performance; begging most heartily his Blessing may go along with it, for the good of some poor Soul, to His Glory, for dear Jesus's sake. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever. *Amen.*

I appeal now solemnly to the great *Jehovah* for the truth of the Narrative I here have made, as to the main, tho' I may have fail'd in some Circumstances, but never willingly: And have been as faithful in the representation of my Sentiments about matter of fact, as the result of my pure Con-
victions. And from this consideration I wou'd take an occasion, if any can prevail, to conjure despondent Spirits to trust to
and hope in the infinite Mercies of God,
and Merits of Christ Jesus. If you refuse -
 to be comforted from such a pregnant In-
 stance of Divine Compassion, know, 'twill -
 one Day rise up in Judgment against you to -
 upbraid your Infidelity. And let the obdu-
 rate and careless, that may chance to cast an -
 Eye here, be perswaded by such as know the -
 Terrors -

- Terrors of the Lord ; for unless they Re-
- pent, they must feel them, and perish for
- ever. I shall leave with such an Expression

Dr. Jackson

Tom. 3. p.

412.

“ When the Judge shall appear in his Glory,
 “ the Book of Conscience shall be fully o-
 “ pen’d, the impresson of every sinful
 “ Thought or Action shall then become le-
 “ gible: Not a Syllable of what we have
 “ spoken to our selves shall be lost, and e-
 “ very Letter or Syllable which hath not
 “ been wash’d away by the Blood of the
 “ Lamb, shall be as a *Stigma* or *Brand* to
 “ the Soul and Conscience wherein it is
 “ found, and shall fret as an incurable
 “ Gangreen and Cancer. Every Seed of
 “ Corruption, whether propagated by our
 “ first Parents, or sown by our selves,
 “ which seem’d to lie dead without Mo-
 “ tion, unless they be truly Mortifi’d by
 “ the Spirit of God, shall at the appea-
 “ rance of the Sun of Righteousness be-
 “ gin to quicken, and grow ripe in a
 “ Moment. And albeit these Seeds be as
 “ many in number as the Sand, tho’ our
 “ whole Flesh or bodily Man be more
 “ full of them, than any Fishes Ventricle
 “ is full of Spawn, yet the least of
 “ them shall grow for its malignant qua-
 “ lity into a Serpent, and sting the Soul
 “ and Body where it is bred, like an Ad-
 “ der. These are the best Fruits, which
 “ they that daily sow to the Flesh, shall
 “ then reap of the Flesh, even Corrupti-
 “ on, Sorrow and Torments incorrupti-
 “ ble and insufferable, yet perpetually to
 “ be suffer’d by them.

Most

Most Blessed God, if any stupid, unbelieving Sinner, shall cast his Eye on these Lines by thy Providence; let thy Spirit of Life and Power so breath on them and his dark, wretched Soul, that some kindly effect may follow: And if nothing less will do, mercifully ~~shake~~ the Center of his Heart with some of these dreadful Terrors here describ'd: Let him feel how real, terrible and unsupportable one drop of thy Wrath is, falling upon his guilty, awaken'd Conscience; that he may prostrate himself in deepest Humility and Self-abasement at the Footstool of thy dreadful Majesty, and so obtain Mercy. If any poor, humble, doubting, desponding Soul, consult this record of thy Judgments and boundless Mercy, permit him not to misapply thy kind severities to his prejudice; but graciously assist him to strengthen his hopes in the fathomless Abysses of thy rich Mercy. Lord! what infidelity reigns in Mens Hearts! The Sadducee believes not thy Being, no, tho' one rose from the Dead; nor a trembling, awaken'd Soul, thy Mercy, tho' Thou send one, as it were, from the Grave and Hell, to proclaim it's boundless. Dear God! most effectually pity both; especially pour in the Oil of Joy and Gladness on wounded Spirits; make the dejected and poor in Spirit abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost. And let all that peruse these Memoirs with an honest, upright Heart, find a whet to seriousness, and a reinforcement to Faith. And God grant,

not

shake

2

not one Tittle of what's here express'd,
may rise up in Judgment against thy
poor unworthy Servant at the great day;
but ever vouchsafe him such large effusi-
ons of thy Grace as may help him to
live up in sincerity to his Convictions;
that he prove not a Cast-away, while he
endeavours to save others, for Jesus thy
Blessed Son's sake. *Amen.*

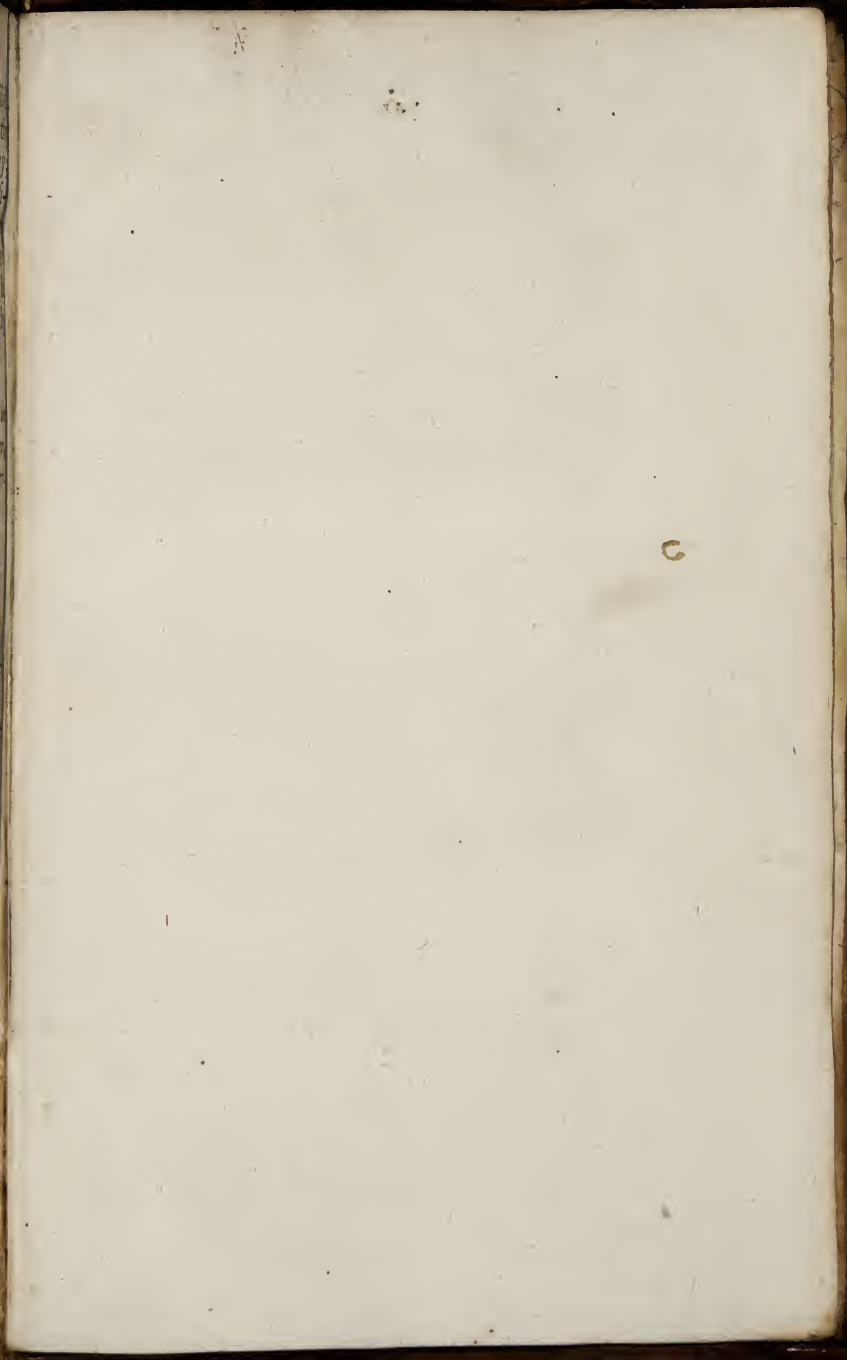
*Now to the only wise God, our Saviour, be
Glory and Majesty, Dominion and Power,
by Angels and Men, both now and ever.
Amen,*

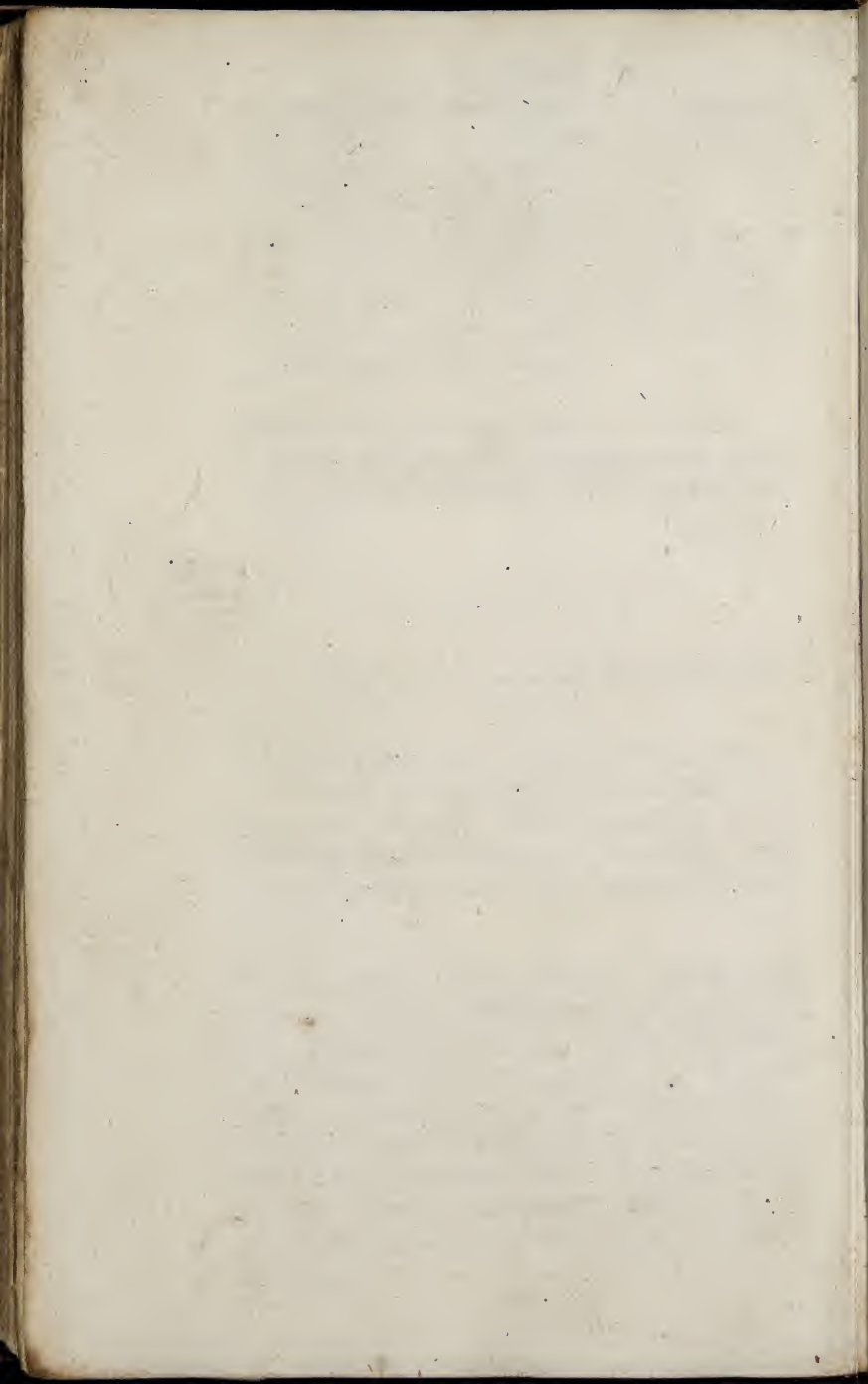
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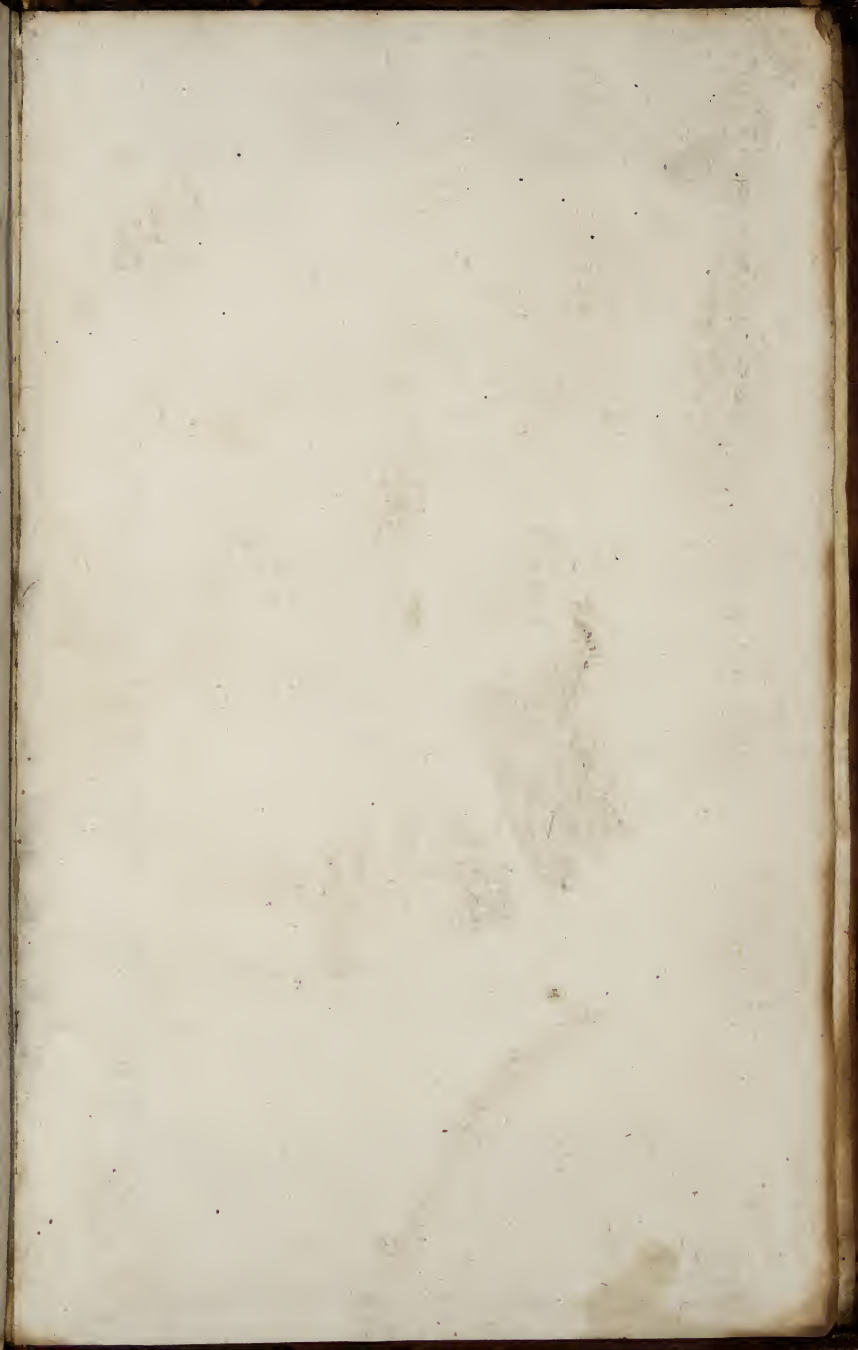
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